



Colville Confederated Tribes Fish and Wildlife Department



*Colville Tribes Fish & Wildlife PO Box 150 Nespelem, WA 99155 * (509)634-2110 * Fax: (509)634-2126

Lead Bullets and Wildlife

Colville Tribes Fish and Wildlife would like to ask hunters to **not** leave animal carcasses in the woods that contain lead. Fragments in those carcasses can lead to death of other animals. In 2015, several eagles were found dead on the Colville Indian Reservation. They all died from lead



poisoning and it is suspected that these birds ate lead fragments while feeding on carcasses.

- If you use lead bullets, carefully place your shots when hunting animals. Shots that go through bones will cause more fragmentation.
- Although careful butchering to remove more meat around the bullet trajectory in a harvested game animal may reduce lead contamination, it does not help wildlife exposed to lead fragments in game remains discarded in the field.
- All birds are susceptible to lead poisoning. However, the more likely victims from bullet sources (from ingesting bullet fragments) are scavengers: eagles, ravens, crows, turkey vultures, magpies, and waterfowl such as ducks, geese, and loons (from a lead shot).
- A little more than one grain of lead is lethal for an eagle (there are 344 grains of lead in a 20-gauge shotgun slug, standard hunting rifle loads typically range from 70 to 220 grains of lead depending on rifle size). More information can be found at www.fws.gov/midwest/refuges/non_toxic.html
- Once lead is digested by an animal, it damages the nervous system and paralyzes its digestive tract. The animal can starve to death or become weak and easy prey.
- **It is best to use copper bullets, a lead-free bullet which leaves no lead in the animal.**
- For more information on finding specific ammunition and videos, go to <http://www.huntingwithnonlead.org/ammoMain2015.html>