Certain Lead Jigs now Illegal in New Hampshire

By Franklin Jacobs

Starting June 1, the use of all lead jigs weighing 1 ounce or less will be prohibited in New Hampshire. This strengthens the 2004 law that banned the use (and sale) of lead sinkers less than or equal to 1 ounce and lead jigs less than 1 inch long. The new law removes the length restriction on jigs and switches to a weight restriction, similar to sinkers. The sale of these restricted lead sinkers and jigs will continue to be illegal. The new law does not apply to lead core line, spinner baits, spoons, or flies.

“Anglers always have been great conservationists,” said Laura Ryder, Public Affairs Education Program Supervisor for N.H. Fish and Game. “This law gives us the opportunity to make a positive difference in the aquatic environment and our loon population.”

The new law removes less than or equal to 1 ounce and lead jigs that banned the use (and sale) of lead sinkers as a significant cause of adult loon mortalities.

“This law will reduce additional lead going into our waterways and will help to prevent future lead ingestions by adult loons,” said Maria Colby, a wildlife rehabilitator from Wings of the Dawn Bird Sanctuary. Colby has had firsthand experience treating loons poisoned by lead.

The laws are in place to help reduce deaths in loons and other waterfowl due to lead poisoning. Studies of the effects of lead tackle on water birds since the 1980s have identified lead sinkers and jigs as a significant cause of adult loon mortalities.

The good news is that there are now many types of non-lead tackle for anglers to choose from. Many nontoxic materials such as steel, brass and bismuth are harder than lead and less likely to get hung up on rocks. Non-lead tackle makes more noise underwater – a huge benefit to anglers, since many fish are attracted to sound vibrations.

“The law was passed back in 2014, but anglers and retailers were given time to make the change, and now it’s here,” said Fisheries Program Supervisor Scott Decker. “Please spread the word to your fellow anglers.”

To learn more, visit fishleadfree.org/nh.

Praxair Surface Technologies

Since management of the Karner blue butterfly project transferred to N.H. Fish and Game in 2000, partnerships with many organizations and businesses have contributed to the restoration effort. One of our local business partners, Praxair Surface Technologies/TAFA Inc., located in Concord, has teamed up with Fish and Game to take a proactive role in restoring the Karner population on its property. Praxair/TAFA employees have cleared brush and helped plant over 1,400 wild lupine and native nectar plants, which serve as food sources for the butterflies.

Karner blue butterflies have very particular habitat needs: sandy acidic soil, nitrogen-rich soil to promote the growth of nectar sources, and wild blue lupine. Pine barrens are the only habitat where wild blue lupine grows. This native plant is essential to the Karner blue butterfly because it is the singular food source for Karner blue caterpillars.

Praxair’s Global Giving Program has provided funding to Fish and Game to purchase supplies for wild lupine plants grown by Concord schoolchildren taking part in the Kids for Karners program, as well as for a timber harvest. They also generously provided funding to Fish and Game for the purchase of an insect bio-chamber that is being used by the Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program to captive-rear Karner blue butterfly eggs.

As the Karner blue restoration effort continues, the support of local businesses and community members is helping to restore the butterflies’ natural habitat and increase the population of this state and federally endangered species.

Learn more about the Karner blue butterfly and the Concord Pine Barrens at wildnh.com/wildlife/profiles/karner-blue-butterfly.html.

- Rebecca Segelhurst, Nongame Biological Aide

Half a Century of Teaching Hunters

Our dedicated volunteer Hunter Education instructors were honored at a banquet this spring.

Russ Galpin of Hillsborough received a citation from Governor Maggie Hassan recognizing his remarkable 55 years of service to the program. He is the first Hunter Education volunteer to reach this milestone.

Richard Wright of Newbury, who teaches at the Brad- ford Fish and Game Club, was recognized for 50 years of continuous service.

“Hunting is safe because of the 400+ volunteers that give tens of thousands of hours of their time training hunters to be safe, ethical and responsible,” said Fish and Game Hunter Education Coordinator Josh Mackay.