



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Grand Teton National Park



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Elk Refuge

## Voluntary Use of Non-Lead Ammunition during the 2009 Elk and Bison Seasons

Grand Teton National Park and National Elk Refuge officials are encouraging hunters currently using lead ammunition to make a **voluntary switch** to non-lead ammunition during the 2009 elk and bison seasons.

Lead is an environmental toxin well known for its capability to directly impact wildlife. Recently, more attention has been directed to lead poisoning of animals that consume carcasses shot with lead bullets from center fire rifles, such as those commonly used in big-game hunting. Studies by Craighead Beringia South, a local non-profit research institute based in Kelly, Wyoming, reveal that during the fall hunting season, lead levels spike in the blood of area ravens and eagles in the Jackson Hole valley. These and other studies have shown that fragmented bullets often stay in the discarded remains of wild game and subsequently enter the food chain as they are consumed by other animals. Lead poisoning can result when wildlife species ingest the toxic material. Recent documentation of lead bullet fragments found in packaged game meat has also raised concerns that this may serve as a potential source of lead contamination in humans.

Hunters have played a key role in wildlife protection and restoration programs for over 100 years. Since hunters commonly use lead bullets to harvest big game on public lands, they have an opportunity to assist agency administrators in managing for healthy wildlife populations by reducing the quantity of lead in the environment. Though lead ammunition does not appear to be affecting large-scale population levels of individual species in the Jackson Hole area, a reduction in the amount of lead deposited in the environment during hunting season can help reduce the loss of individual raptors such as bald and golden eagles. Several ammunition manufacturers have responded to the demand for non-lead ammunition by making high performance non-lead bullets available in the most popular rifle calibers.

By reporting non-lead ammunition use this season, hunters will provide Grand Teton National Park and National Elk Refuge staff with a means to measure participation in the **voluntary** program this year. This will help the agencies explore incentive programs to encourage additional participation during the 2010 elk and bison seasons. Hunters should use the following reporting guidelines for 2009:

- Hunters on the National Elk Refuge are required to turn in a report at the conclusion of their permitted hunt period(s). The report is entitled "Detachable Hunt Report" and is issued as part of the permit packet. Hunters can note on the report whether or not they used non-lead ammunition while hunting on the refuge.
- Persons participating in the elk reduction program in Grand Teton National Park are required to turn in their hunt permit if they successfully harvest an elk. The hunt permit includes a designated area to indicate whether or not non-lead ammunition was used this season.

Hunters **are not** required to use non-lead ammunition while pursuing elk in Grand Teton National Park or National Elk Refuge, or while pursuing bison on the National Elk Refuge. This is strictly a **voluntary program**. However, by participating in this program, hunters can help to maintain support for hunting programs by demonstrating a commitment to safe, quality hunting practices that will benefit the long-term conservation of wildlife.

### Internet Sites for Further Information

- Craighead Beringia South: <http://www.bswy.us/left-page2.php>
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/hunting/lead/index.html>
- North Dakota Department of Health: <http://www.ndhealth.gov/lead/venison/>
- Peregrine Fund: [http://www.peregrinefund.org/lead\\_conference/](http://www.peregrinefund.org/lead_conference/)