**Factsheet**

**The LEAD Act - Lead Endangers Animals Daily Act**

**Ending the Use of Lead Ammunition in National Refuges**

**What Does the LEAD Act do?**

This bill would phase out the use of lead ammunition on National Wildlife Refuges, putting an end to the needless incidental poisoning of millions of wild animals by lead left behind in fields, forests, and wetlands, including in the remains of animals peppered with fragmented shot and not retrieved. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has a statutory duty to act to protect and conserve wildlife on its lands, and in 2017, consistent with that responsibility, issued a Director’s Order to phase out the use of lead on these federal lands by 2022. However, the order was undone by the new Secretary of Interior on his first day, taking no time to examine the science and data behind the original policy.

**Why Support the LEAD Act?**

**Lead Ammo Harms Wildlife, Including Endangered Species**

In 1991, FWS banned the use of lead ammunition in waterfowl hunting and the results have been positive on the ecosystem. Waterfowl hunting has continued uninterrupted, lead poisoning has been reduced and numerous species have been protected for a variety of wildlife uses. Since the implementation of the ban, researchers found that the use of lead-free shot reduced the death of mallards from lead poisoning by 64%, reduced lead in black ducks by 44%, and overall saved approximately 1.4 million ducks a year. The study further shows that blood lead concentrations significantly declined in both golden eagles and turkey vultures within a year. Lead is the leading cause of death for the endangered Condor, and California completely phased out the use of lead in the state, including on federal lands, in July 2019. Other states, such as Arizona, have taken partial action, but federal action is ultimately needed to better protect wildlife and the environment, and the federal government has primary authority on wildlife management on federal wildlife refuge lands.

**Reducing the Use of Lead Protects Human Health & Alternatives are Available**

The danger posed by lead is not limited to wildlife. Lead is a threat to families who consume animals hunted with lead ammunition, and the spent shot left behind also taints lakes and ponds. Numerous studies have shown higher lead levels in families that rely on wild game for food. Lead alternatives are readily available, and comparably priced copper and steel ammunition outperform lead and do not keep killing days, weeks, and months after leaving the weapon. The nation has taken steps to reduce human exposure to lead in gasoline, plumbing, paint, and toys, and it's time to take this action in sport hunting.