

## **Park Rapids Enterprise, Saturday, July 10, 2021 Edition:**

### **Learn about lead, loon watchers and more**

The Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations (HC COLA) will have our educational table at the Hubbard County Fair in the Environmental Education Building. Please stop by to learn about ways you can help the Loons here on Hubbard County area lakes!

On Friday 7/16 and Sat 7/17 between 11 AM and 4 PM, we will have the Collection Box for lead tackle for the "Get The Lead Out" program through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) at our table. We will also have examples of non-toxic alternative tackle. This lead-free tackle protects our state bird, the common loon.

Teach your tadpoles! Create a lead-free tackle box for your kids or grandkids. Learn about what is the problem with lead. Lead is a toxic metal that is lethal in small amounts to common loons and other wildlife, including trumpeter swans and bald eagles. Across the United States, lead poisoning is a leading cause of death for loons. An estimated 25% of loons die from lead poisoning, primarily from swallowing lead jigs and sinkers. Loons consume fishing tackle in several ways:

- Picking up lost tackle found on the bottom of lakes when they gather pebbles for their gizzards to help them grind and digest food
- Striking at bait or caught fish as it is being retrieved by an angler
- Eating a fish that has ingested tackle or has tackle attached

Lead has negative effects on the nervous and reproductive systems of mammals and birds. Loons with lead poisoning exhibit physical and behavioral changes, such as loss of balance, gasping, tremors, and limited flying abilities. Because of these symptoms, loons are more vulnerable to predators and have difficulty feeding, mating, nesting, or caring for their young.

We will also have information available on the LoonWatcher Survey Program through the MN DNR. There are just 13 Hubbard County Lakes signed up thus far for 2021. It is not too late for you to sign up for 2021! Email [Andrew.herberg@state.mn.us](mailto:Andrew.herberg@state.mn.us) and visit the website at <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/nongame/index.html>

We will also have information available on the upcoming 7/29/2021 presentation at 6:30 PM via zoom or in-person by Meg Duhr, MAISRC's Research Outreach Specialist. Duhr will be presenting information from the UMN AIS Research Center (MAISRC) which will cover how zebra mussels impact a lake ecosystem and the recreational experience, what lakeshore property owners can and can't do about zebra mussels and why continued AIS prevention efforts are needed. An update on the MAISRC research progress in zebra mussel control tools will also be provided. Email [hccolamn@gmail.com](mailto:hccolamn@gmail.com) for the details or stop by the Hubbard County Fair at our HC COLA educational table!

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We will also have examples of non-toxic alternative tackle. This lead-free tackle protects our state bird, the common loon.

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SHARON  
NATZEL  
COLA  
President

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We will also have information available on the upcoming July 29 presentation at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom or in-person by Meg Duhr, Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) outreach specialist.

Duhr will be presenting information from the MAISRC, which will cover how zebra mussels impact a lake ecosystem and the recreational experience, what lakeshore property owners can and can't do about zebra mussels and why continued AIS prevention efforts are needed. An update on the MAISRC research progress in zebra mussel control tools will also be provided. Email [hccolamn@gmail.com](mailto:hccolamn@gmail.com) for the details or stop by our COLA educational table at the county fair!

Members of the Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations write a monthly column in the Enterprise regarding water-related opportunities in the region.