



An Open Letter to the REACH Committee on the consideration of use of lead shot in wetlands

20th May 2020

Dear REACH Committee Member,

We write to you to urge your support for the health-protective measure of restricting the use of lead shot.

Lead ammunition represents a One Health issue and its replacement with non-toxic alternatives will spare the one million waterbirds being poisoned to death annually, and reduce soil contamination and health impacts on those consuming lead-shot game meat. The scientific consensus on this issue is clear as represented by the extensive body of evidence and the [open letter from the European Scientists](#) on the need for transition to the widely-available alternative ammunition. At a time of current global crisis, and reflecting on these first two decades of the 21st century which have seen many emerging infectious diseases in wildlife, it feels appropriate to remind ourselves of the insidious sub-lethal impacts of lead on the physiology, including immune-capability, of those exposed to it experienced by humans and vertebrate animals alike. Removing this hazard when alternatives exist is surely the appropriate response.

Both of our organisations seek to ensure healthy environments in which biodiversity and human communities can thrive. Hunting within these settings has to be sustainable for both sectors to succeed. Additionally, we write to you as heads of international organisations with headquarters in Europe: Wetlands International is based in the Netherlands which banned all lead shot for hunting in 1993 and for clay shooting in 2004; and WWT is based in the UK where now the [shooting organisations have called for a voluntary ban on lead shot for all quarry hunting](#).

We are aware of those voices who resist change, however, we wish to draw your attention to a letter from the former heads of Europe's hunting organisations who have called for the replacement of lead ammunition with non-toxic alternatives in a [letter to the Commission](#) in relation to this REACH process (from page 12). They are in the position of fully understanding the issue from the perspective of the practicalities of change and the need for change if hunting is to have a place in a modern Europe.

We sincerely hope that the two current REACH processes addressing risks from lead ammunition help to address this on-going toxic problem once and for all.

Yours faithfully,

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