

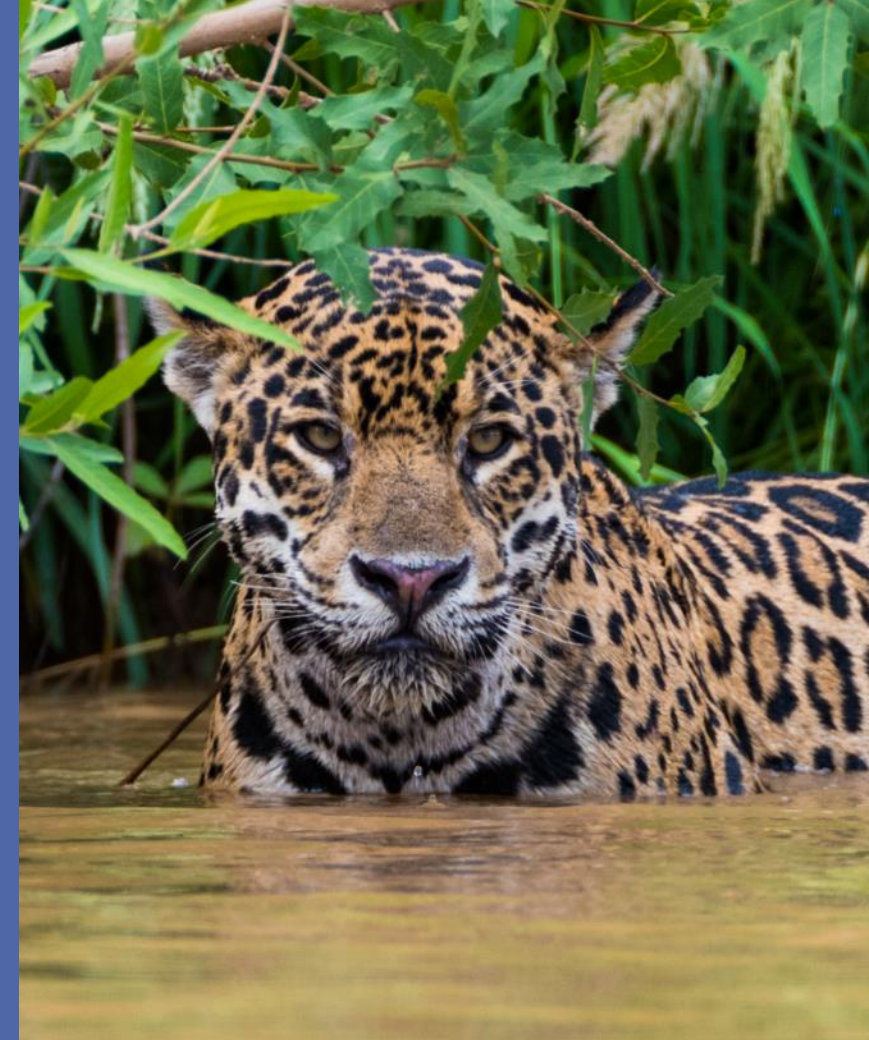


# Global Workshop on CMS Legislation

## Lead Poisoning

Iván Ramírez, Head of Avian Unit

3-5 June 2025, Bonn, Germany



The European Union was recognized as Champion Plus for its generous support and commitment towards strengthening national legislation for migratory species for the period 2020 - 2025. This activity has been funded with the contribution granted by the European Commission under the Migratory Species Champion Programme and through the Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC Programme) Cooperation Agreements with UNEP.



# Lead Poisoning and CMS

- 2011 Preventing Poisoning Working Group established (PPWG)
- 2014 Resolution 11.15 – adopting Guidelines for all ammunition phase-out by 2017
- 2020 Resolution 11.15 (RevCOP13) – Creation of Task Force on Phasing Out Lead Ammunition and Lead Fishing Weights.
- 2024 Resolution 11.15(RevCOP14) – Insists on encouraging Parties to support and implement both PPWG and Lead TF
- Despite efforts, both groups not active



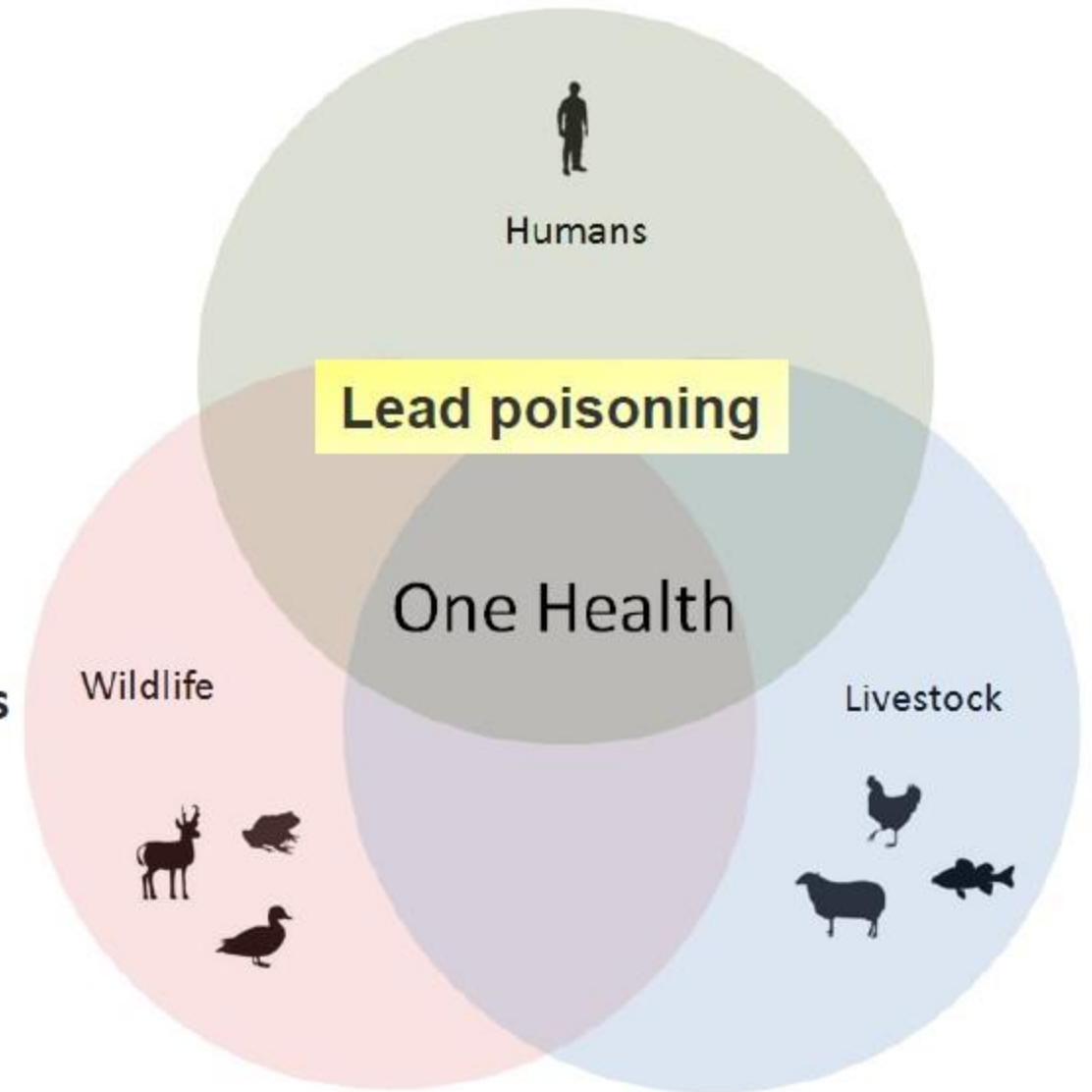
# Lead is highly toxic

Non-essential, non-specific poison

Affects virtually every physiological system

Global problem for **humans, domestic animals** and **wildlife**

No Observable Adverse Effect Level –  
(NOAEL)





# Impacts (lethal)

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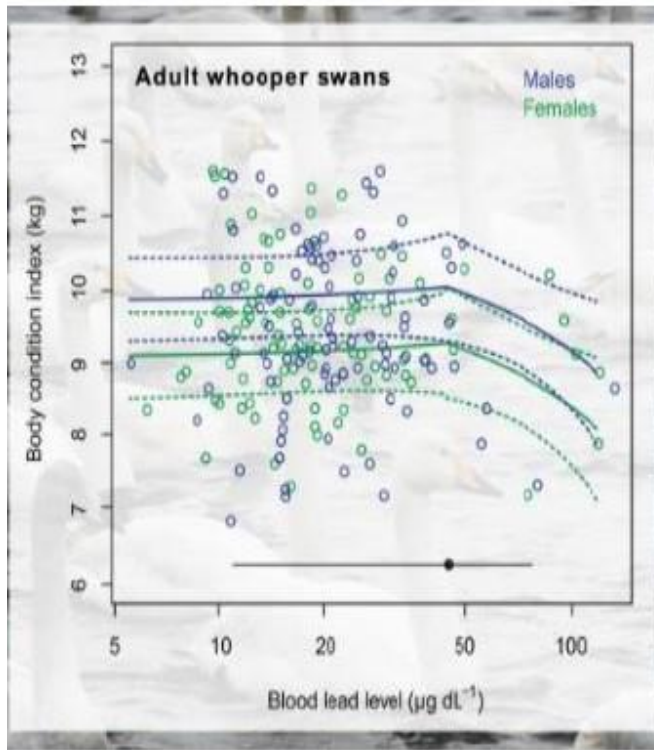
## Europe:

~1 million deaths of 17 species of wildfowl *alone* annually



# Impacts (sub-lethal)

- Immuno-competence
- Reproduction
- Ability to find food and evade predators



*Newth et al. 2016*

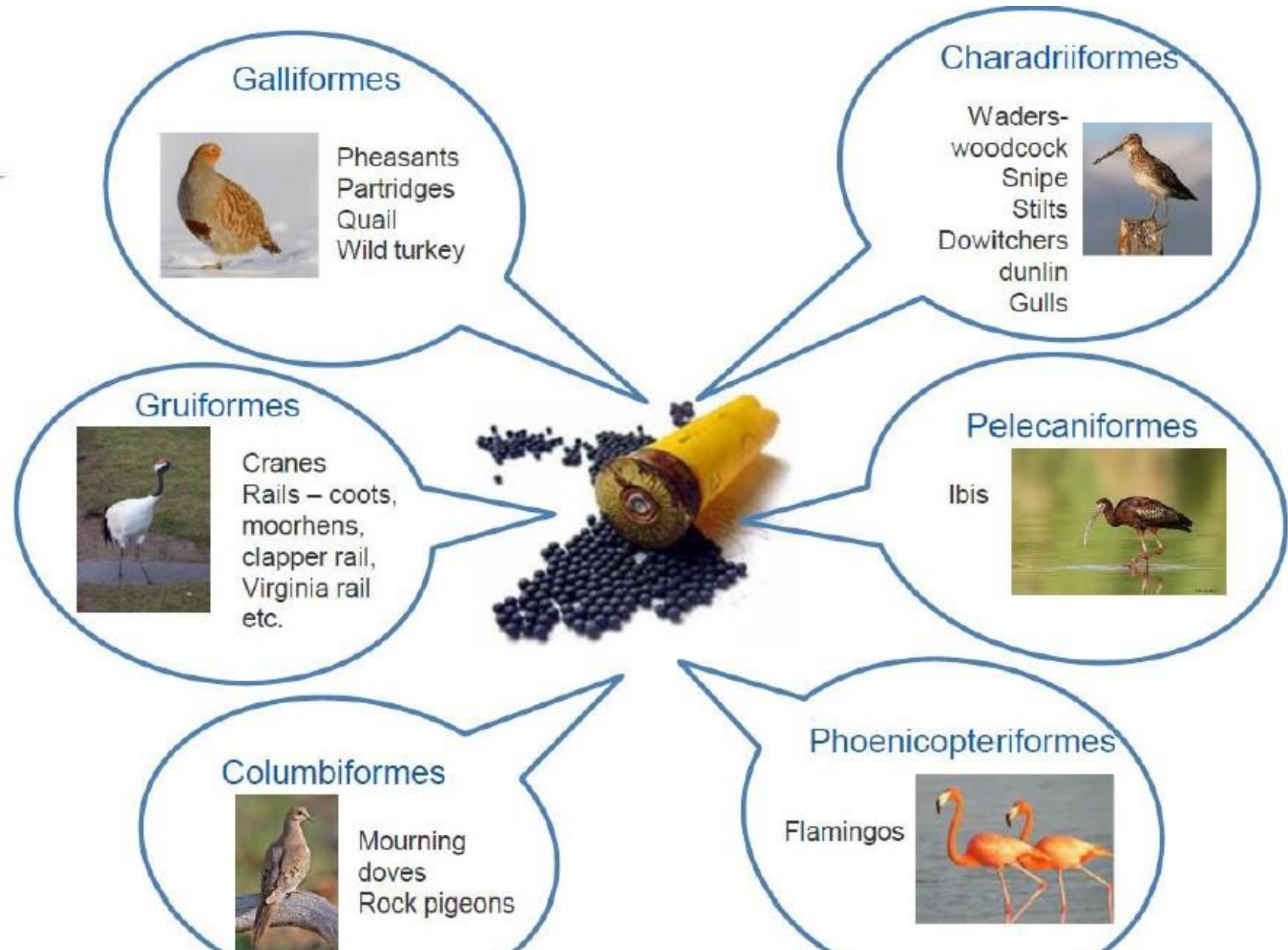


## Other taxa

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Estimates of mortality less certain

> 1 million deaths per year of 'terrestrial' feeding birds



# Lead poisoning and the conservation of vultures

- Vultures are one of the guild of birds most threatened
- 70% of vulture species declining → serious conservation challenges
- Lead poisoning one of the threats
- Relatively little information



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

## Science of the Total Environment

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/scitotenv](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/scitotenv)

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Review

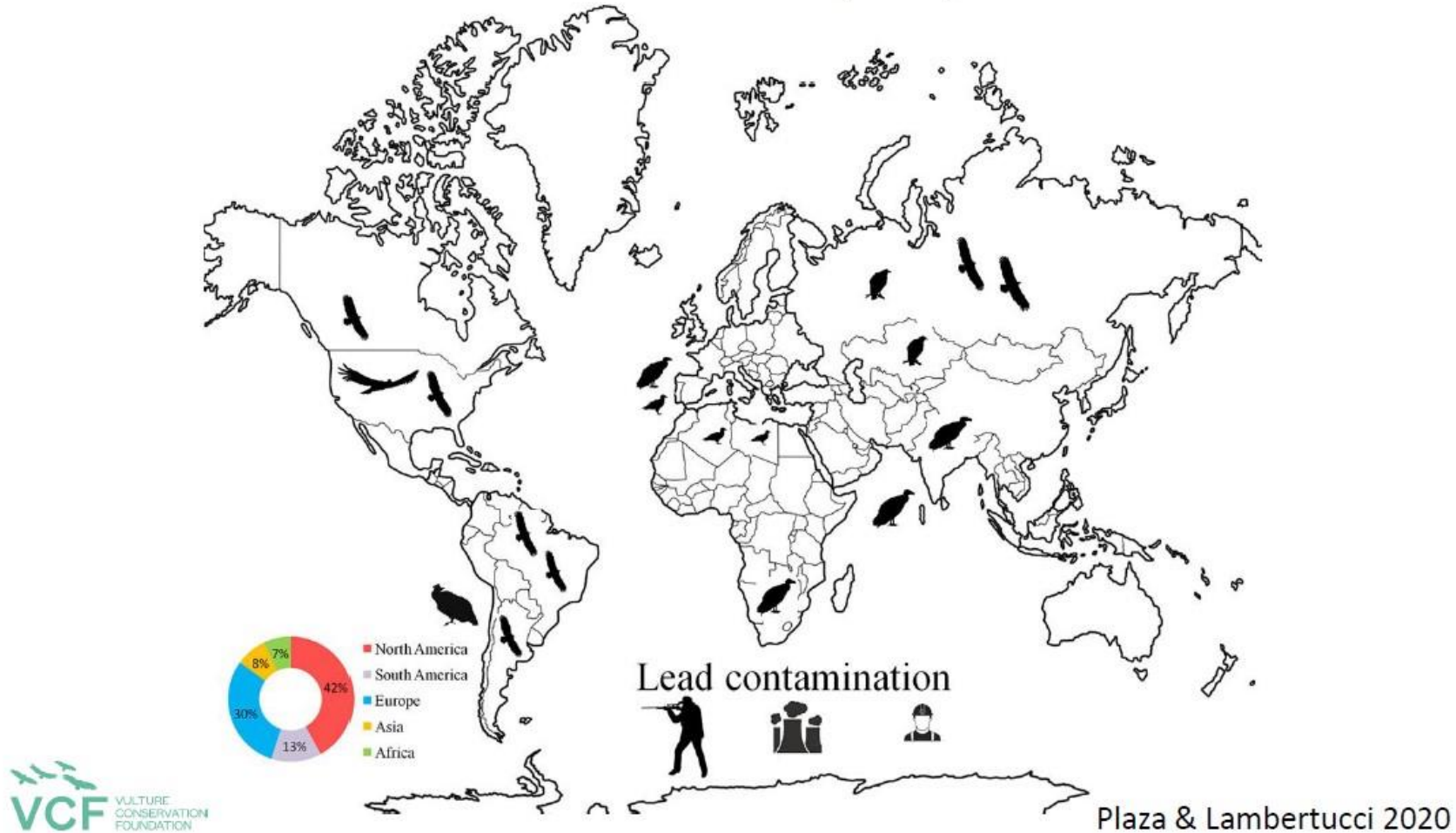
### What do we know about lead contamination in wild vultures and condors? A review of decades of research

Pablo I. Plaza\*, Sergio A. Lambertucci



# Geographical bias

USA & Spain are the countries where the impact of lead on vultures has been most studied (n=62)



## The Solution – the use of **non-lead ammunition** for shooting

- **Multilateral environmental agreements including UN resolutions** call for restrictions on lead ammunition – UNEP-CMS/ AEWA IUCN
- **EU REACH** restriction on lead shot in wetlands



*Photo: Donal McCarthy*



**REACH: regulation of the European Union (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals). Since 2021**



- 1. REACH - Restriction on lead shot in wetlands**
- 2. REACH - Wider restriction – lead ammunition & fishing weights**

# Proposed EU Lead Restriction

- Jan 2021: Ban on lead ammunition in wetlands
- Feb 2025: Draft proposal for broader ban to all EU land
  - Includes broad implementation period (5 year)
  - Does not address sports shooting
  - Several potential derogations



## Expected next steps at EU

In the coming months, the [REACH](#) Committee will discuss and vote on the proposal.

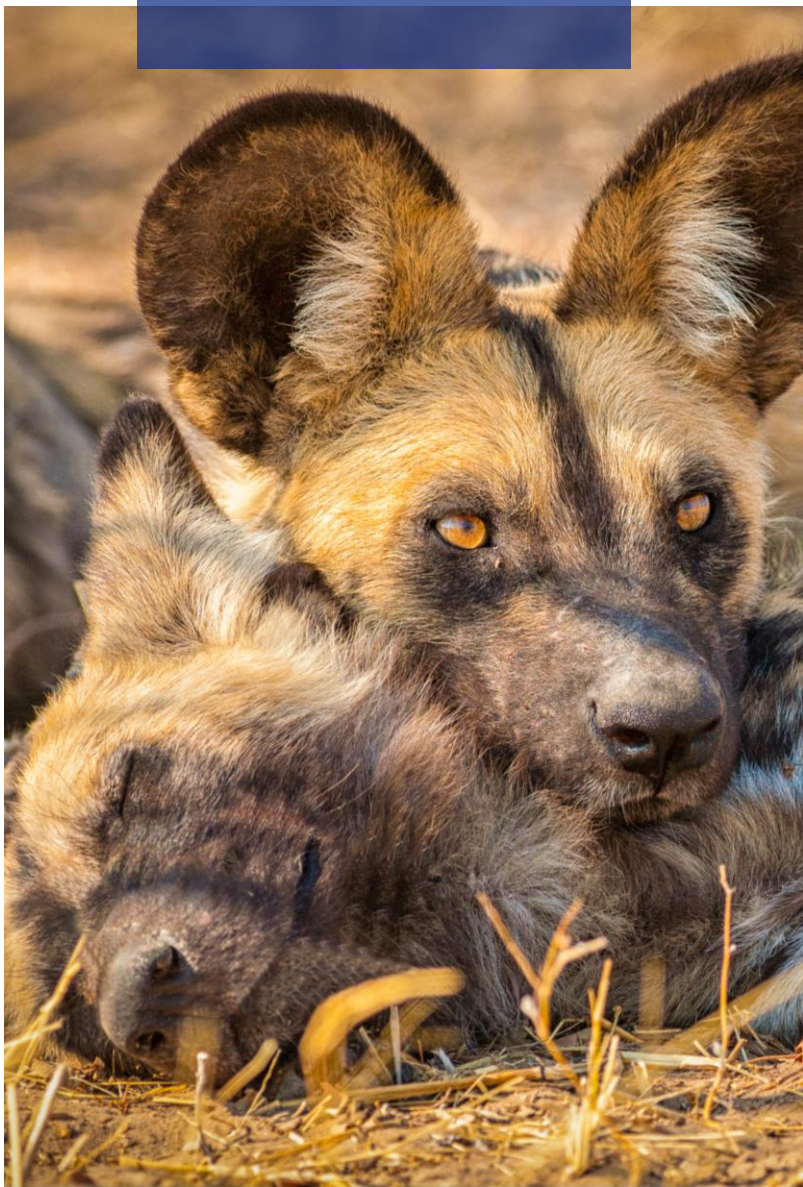
Once approved, the European Parliament and Council will review the draft regulation.

If there are no objections, the ban on lead ammunition and fishing weights will become law.





CMS proposed next  
steps



## Strategic Review in 2024-25

1. PPWG not operating because of lack of resources and/or leading Party
2. PPWG very broad (pesticides, insecticides, NSAIDs, poison baits, lead...)
3. Lead Task Force not operating despite initial interest
4. Proposal to cancel PPWG and
  1. Ensure poison baits are dealt within IKB TF
  2. Ensure coordination with key CMS instruments (Raptors, AEMLAP, CAF)
  3. Relaunch of Lead Task Force at COP15

## Lead Task Force

- Support ongoing efforts for a stricter ban in EU
- Support implementation of poisoning guidelines
- Raise awareness amongst hunters, anglers and sports federations
- Promote adoption of non-toxic alternatives



# Additional info



## Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

- About
- Convention Bodies
- Documents
- Activities
- Topics
- Species
- Publications
- CMS Instruments

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### The Intergovernmental Task Force on Phasing Out the Use of Lead Ammunition and Lead Fishing Weights (Lead Task Force)



#### The Intergovernmental Task Force on Phasing Out the Use of Lead Ammunition and Lead Fishing Weights (Lead Task Force)

The Lead Task Force has been established under [CMS Resolution 11.15 \(Rev. COP14\)](#), entitled "Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds", and related Decisions 14.134 to 14.136 to support the Parties to the CMS, its related instruments, and other relevant MEAs in meeting their obligations to phase out the use of lead ammunition and lead fishing weights.

The Task Force will consist of designated government representatives from Parties to the Convention, ensuring regional balance. In addition, observers, including MEA secretariats, CMS representatives, academic institutions, NGOs, other stakeholders, and independent experts, will be invited to contribute to the work of the Task Force.

#### Scope of the Task Force

The goal of the Task Force is to facilitate concerted efforts and actions, as well as knowledge and information sharing to support Parties in the phasing out of lead ammunition and lead fishing weights. It will operate on a global level and cover all migratory bird taxa as identified by CMS and its relevant associated instruments.

Among the most important activities of the Task Force will include, but are not limited to:

- Assist and support Parties, in implementing the relevant sections of the Guidelines to Prevent the Risk of Poisoning to Migratory Birds adopted by COP11
- Facilitate understanding and offer technical advice and support to Parties on the Guidelines as they relate to lead

UN Environment CMS Fact Sheet

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

Photo: iStockphoto.com

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**THE EFFECTS OF LEAD ON MIGRATORY BIRDS**

The ingestion of lead from ammunition, fishing weights and contaminated prey has devastating impacts on many bird species and is one of the leading causes of wild bird mortality (Valverde-Coll et al., 2019; Green et al., 2022).

Waterfowl, raptors and scavenger birds are particularly at risk of lead poisoning due to their feeding habits (Pain et al., 2019). Acute exposure to high levels through the ingestion of lead causes rapid fatality in many bird species (Pain et al., 2019). Meanwhile, chronic exposure to lead can impair neurological functions, weaken the immune system and affect the reproductive system of avian species (Valverde-Coll et al., 2019; Chiverton et al., 2022).

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**What is lead and how does it enter the environment?**

Lead (Pb) is a heavy metal that is being used in various products, contributing to its widespread release into the environment (Green et al., 2022). The toxicity of lead to both wildlife and humans has been well-documented for decades, leading to increased global regulations to limit its release (Chiverton et al., 2022; Gatz et al., 2018). However, in certain applications, the use of lead remains unregulated, continuing to pose risks to the environment.

Lead is still commonly found in ammunition, including gunshot pellets and bullets which are used for hunting and sports shooting (Pain et al., 2019) and in fishing weights, which help to keep nets and tackle submerged (Czadek et al., 2019). Birds are particularly vulnerable to lead poisoning through the ingestion of spent ammunition left in the environment by hunters and sportsmen (Pain et al., 2019). Many bird species also ingest lead fishing weights as they mistake it for food or grit (Czadek et al., 2019). Additionally, scavenger birds and raptors are exposed when they feed on prey or carrion contaminated with lead bullets (Green et al., 2022; Pain et al., 2019).

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**Proposed Restrictions of Lead within the EU**

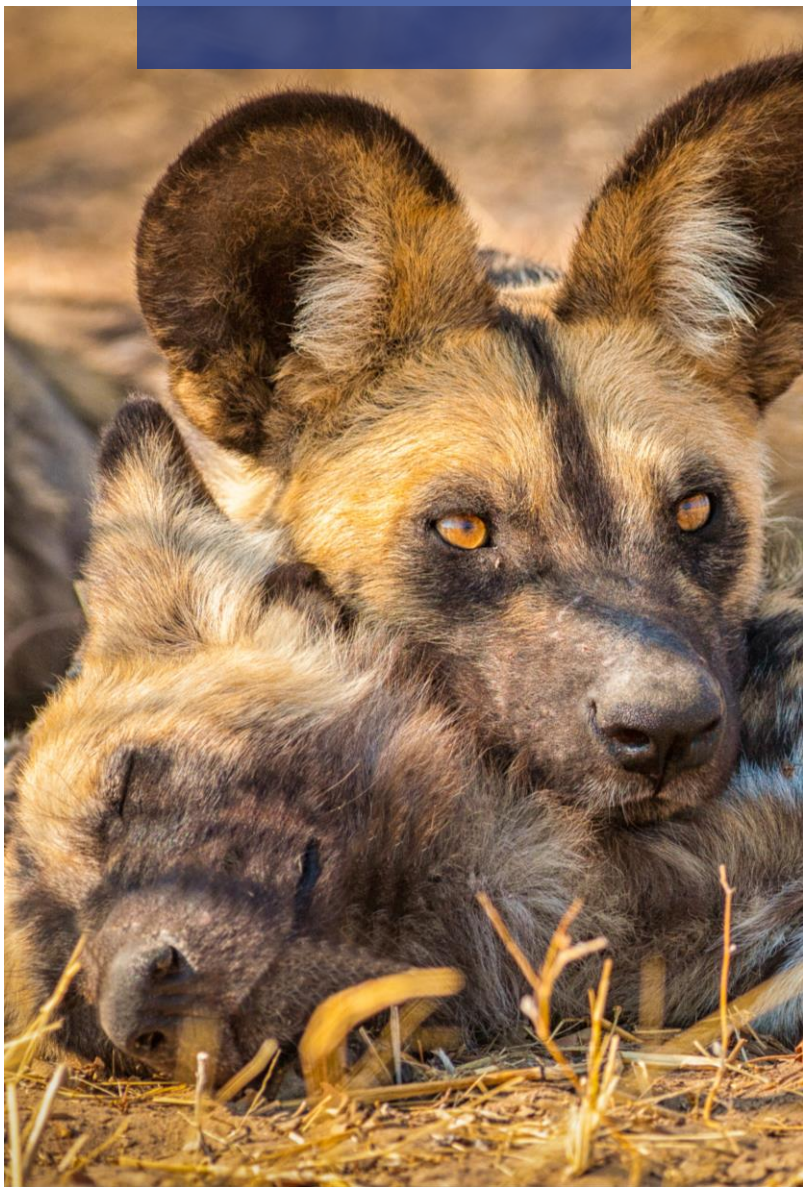
In January 2021, the European Commission amended the Commission Regulation on the manufacture, placing on the market and use of certain dangerous substances, mixtures and articles (Annex XVII to Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006) to restrict the use of lead in wetlines, aiming to reduce lead poisoning among waterbirds (European Commission, 2021).

However, despite this measure, approximately 97,000 tonnes of lead are still released into the environment, primarily from sports shooting (79%), hunting (14%), and fishing (7%). If no further action is taken, an estimated 1.94 million tonnes of lead could accumulate over the next 20 years (ECHA, 2021).

In response to these serious concerns, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) has proposed stricter EU-wide restrictions on lead use in ammunition for hunting, outdoor sports shooting as well as in fishing to the European Commission (ECHA, 2021). In February 2025, the European Commission presented a draft proposal for broader lead regulations based on ECHA's recommendations.

Photo: iStockphoto.com





## Key messages

1. Need for embedding biodiversity safeguards in national and regional hunting regulations with regards to lead ammunition
2. Need to increase monitoring of impact, specially outside EU
3. Need to increase capacity building to enforcement agencies
4. Promotion of non-lead ammunition, in coordination with sport federations and hunter's associations key to success



THANK YOU!  
¡GRACIAS!  
MERCI!

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