Lead Shot Encyclopedia Article

Lead Shot

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Contents

Lead Shot Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Lead Shot.....3

Lead Shot

Lead shot refers to the small pellets that are fired by shotguns while **hunting** waterfowl or upland fowl, or while skeet shooting. Most lead shots miss their target and are dissipated into the **environment**. Because the shot is within the particle-size range that is favored by medium-sized birds as grit, it is often ingested and retained in the gizzard to aid in the mechanical abrasion of plant seeds, the first step in avian digestion. However, the shot also abrades during this process, releasing toxic lead that can poison the bird. It has been estimated that as much as 2–3 percent of the North American waterfowl population, or several million birds, may die from shot-caused lead **poisoning** each year. This problem will decrease in intensity, however, because lead shot is now being substantially replaced by steel shot in North America.

See Also

Heavy Metals and Heavy Metal Poisoning