



# OFAH INSIGHTS

## LEAD SURVEY REPORT

Ontario Federation *of Anglers and Hunters*

4601 Guthrie Drive  
Peterborough, ON  
K9J 8L5

T: 705.748.6324  
W: [www.ofah.org](http://www.ofah.org)



## INTRODUCTION

On April 5, 2018, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) requested public feedback on two initiatives with supporting studies:

### **Moving toward using more lead-free ammunition**

### **Moving toward using lead-free fishing tackle**

These initiatives have the potential to significantly impact the activities of anglers, hunters, and sport shooters. To inform and help guide our advocacy, we polled both OFAH members and non-members to better understand their perspectives.

Specifically, we wanted to gather information on the demographics of survey respondents, how they use ammunition and tackle, their opinions of the availability and effectiveness of lead-free alternatives, and the potential impacts of a lead ban on the outdoors community.

The survey was active from May 2-9, 2018, and was shared through the OFAH website and social media platforms, along with OFAH e-news subscribers.



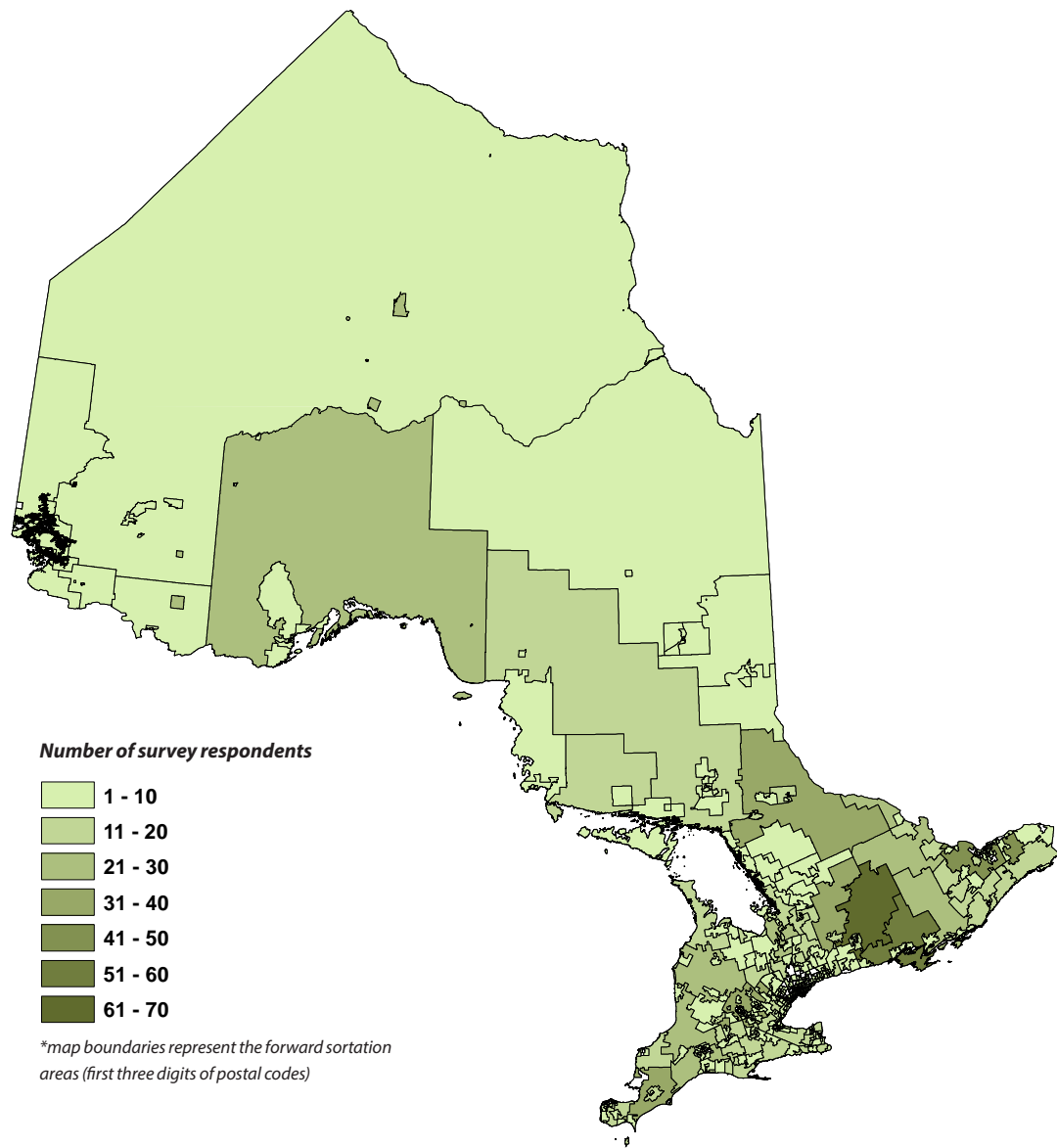
## SURVEY RESPONDENTS

OFAH members proved to be highly engaged on these issues. The survey garnered **3,251** responses -- **82.2%** of which were active OFAH members. Furthermore, **834** respondents provided additional comments and insight on these issues.

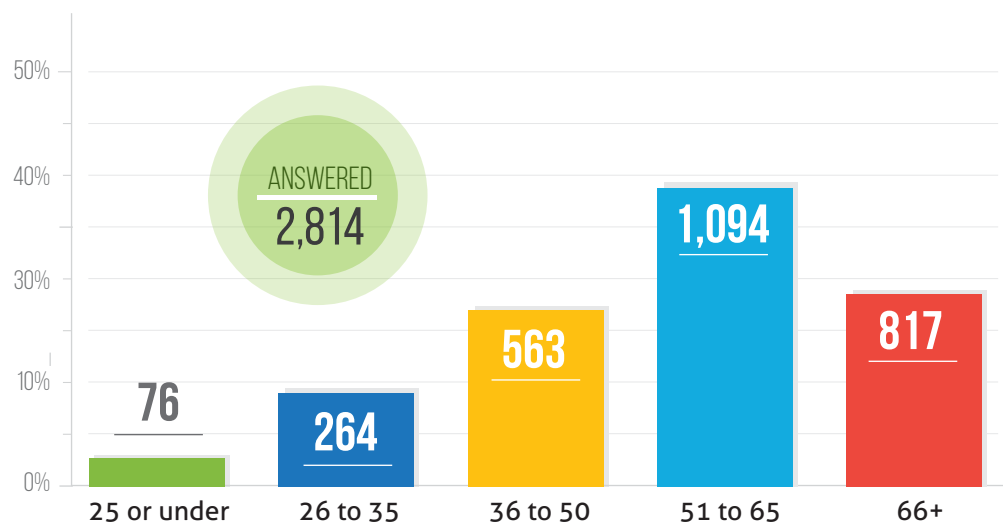
Survey respondents were asked to provide the first three digits of their postal code to help us map the distribution of responses.

More than **2,100** respondents provided this information from across Ontario as well as additional responses from Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Manitoba, Alberta, and British Columbia.

The survey consisted of two sections, one related to ammunition and the other related to fishing tackle with a specific focus on sinkers and jigs. The majority of respondents (**70%**) chose to answer both sections while **20.1%** and **9.9%** chose to answer only the ammunition or tackle sections, respectively.



## PLEASE INDICATE YOUR AGE RANGE

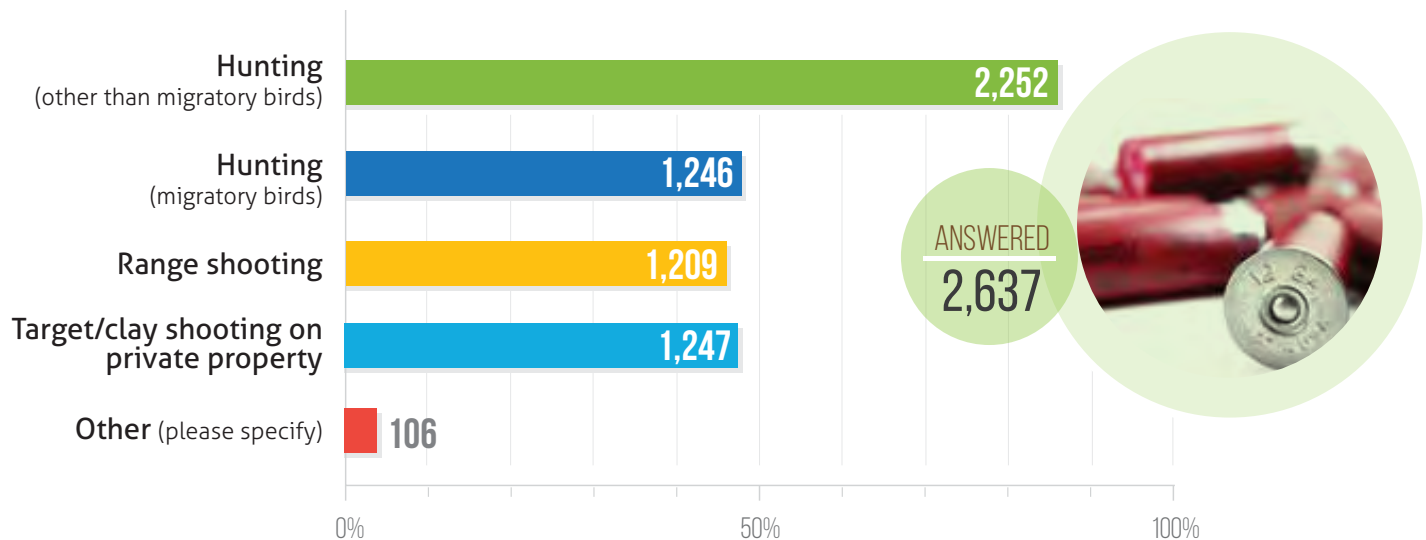


## GENERAL USE

Ontario's angling, hunting, and shooting communities are composed of subgroups that use recreational equipment in very different ways. This survey looked at how respondents currently use ammunition and tackle in order to better understand the impact of a switch to lead-free alternatives.

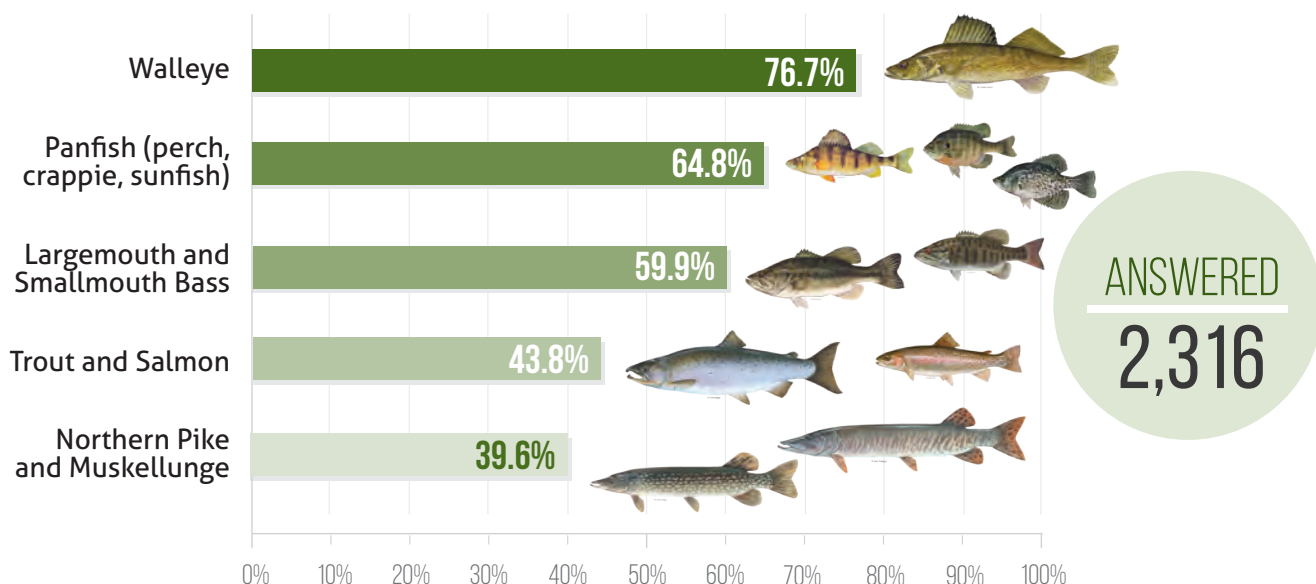
Over two-thirds of hunter and shooter respondents (**68.8%**) participated in at least two ammunition-related activities.

### WHAT CATEGORIES BEST DESCRIBE YOUR USE OF AMMUNITION?



The vast majority of angler respondents (**98.8%**) use sinkers and/or jigs when fishing, but this varies considerably based on the species of fish being targeted. For example, when fishing for Walleye, **76.7%** of respondents indicated they use sinkers and/or jigs at least "some of the time" compared to only **39.6%** when fishing for Northern Pike and Muskellunge.

### PERCENTAGE OF ANGLERS WHO USE SINKERS AND/OR JIGS AT LEAST SOME OF THE TIME FOR VARIOUS SPECIES:



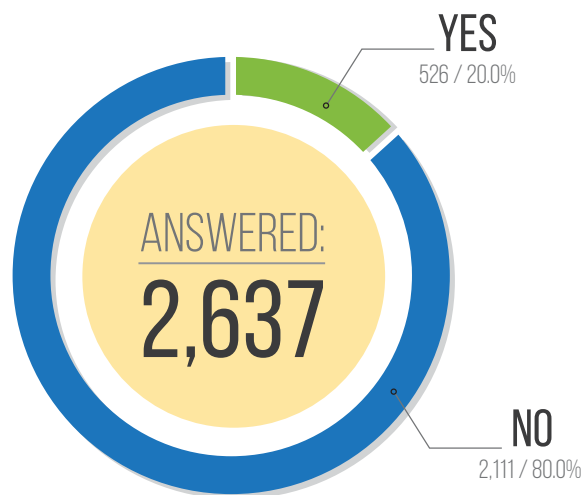


## LEAD-SPECIFIC USE

Lead makes up a high percentage of the recreational equipment used by respondents. Lead has many properties that makes it ideally suited for these purposes – it is inexpensive, readily available, dense, malleable, and can be easily formed into a variety of useful shapes and sizes.

Except for the purposes of migratory bird hunting, an overwhelming number of respondents have not purchased lead-free ammunition for their hunting and shooting activities.

## HAVE YOU EVER PURCHASED LEAD-FREE AMMUNITION FOR PURPOSES OTHER THAN MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING?

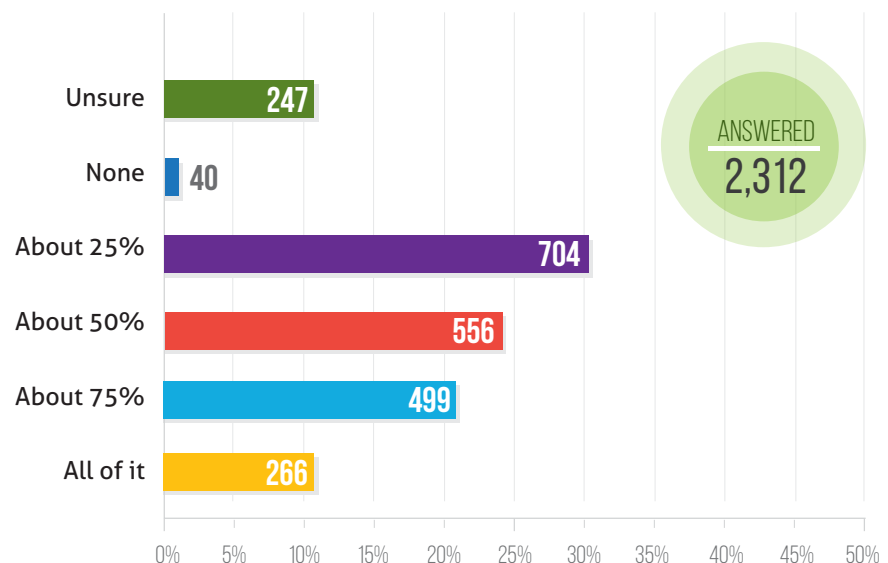


### SURVEY RESPONDENT SAYS:

**"I hunt only with antique (flintlock) firearms; small game and large game using bird shot and round ball. I have a supply of lead and I mould my own ammunition. I have more than a dozen flint firearms worth many thousands of dollars and they can only use lead ammunition."**

Lead also makes up a large proportion of most anglers' tackle boxes, with one-third of respondents estimating that **75%** or more of their terminal tackle contains lead.

## APPROXIMATELY HOW MUCH OF YOUR TERMINAL TACKLE CONTAINS LEAD?



### WHAT IS TERMINAL TACKLE?

**Terminal tackle is ALL fishing gear that is attached to your line past the end of your rod**

## CONCERNS REGARDING LEAD

ECCC published reports from an independent consultant on the use of lead ammunition and fishing tackle.

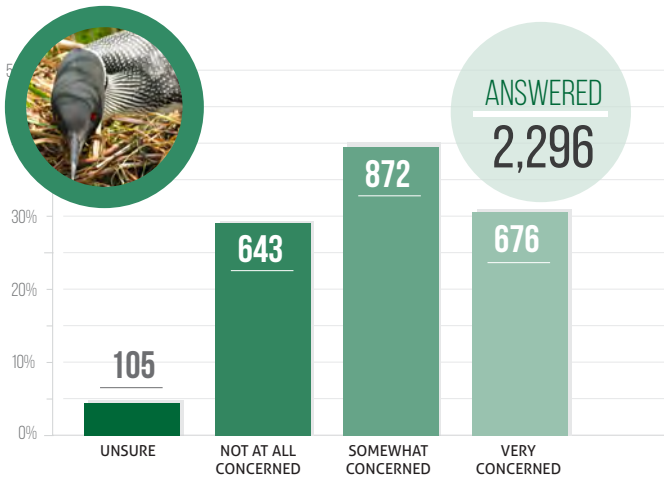
Those reports claim that anglers, hunters, and sport shooters do not care about the potential effects of lead toxicity on the environment and human health. The responses to the OFAH survey clearly demonstrated this to be false, with respondents showing a wide range of opinions on these issues.

The level of concern varies by issue, but in general approximately **60%** of respondents indicated that they were “somewhat concerned” or “very concerned” about specific aspects of lead toxicity.

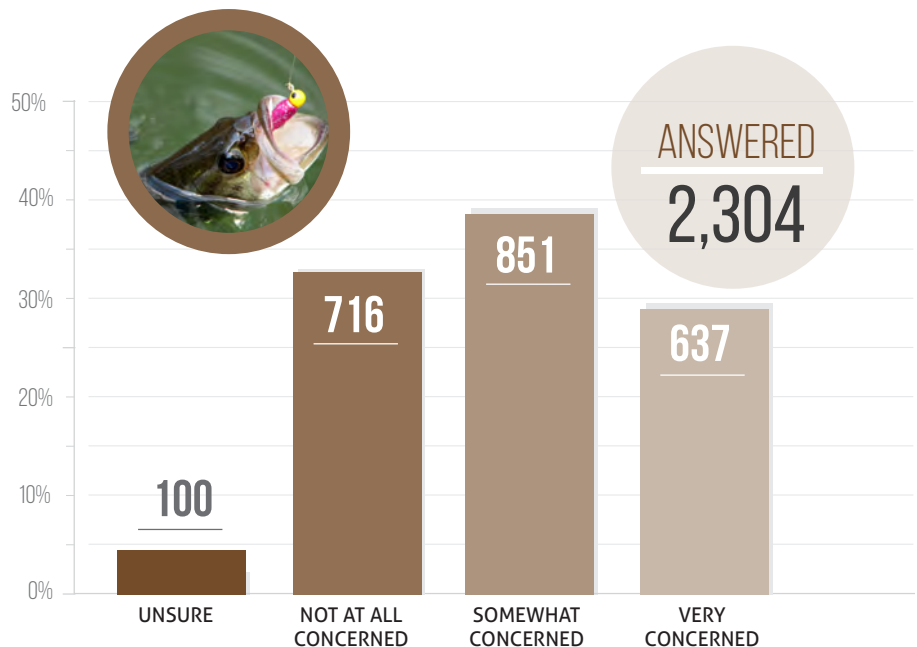
## EFFECTS OF LEAD SINKERS AND JIGS ON WATER QUALITY



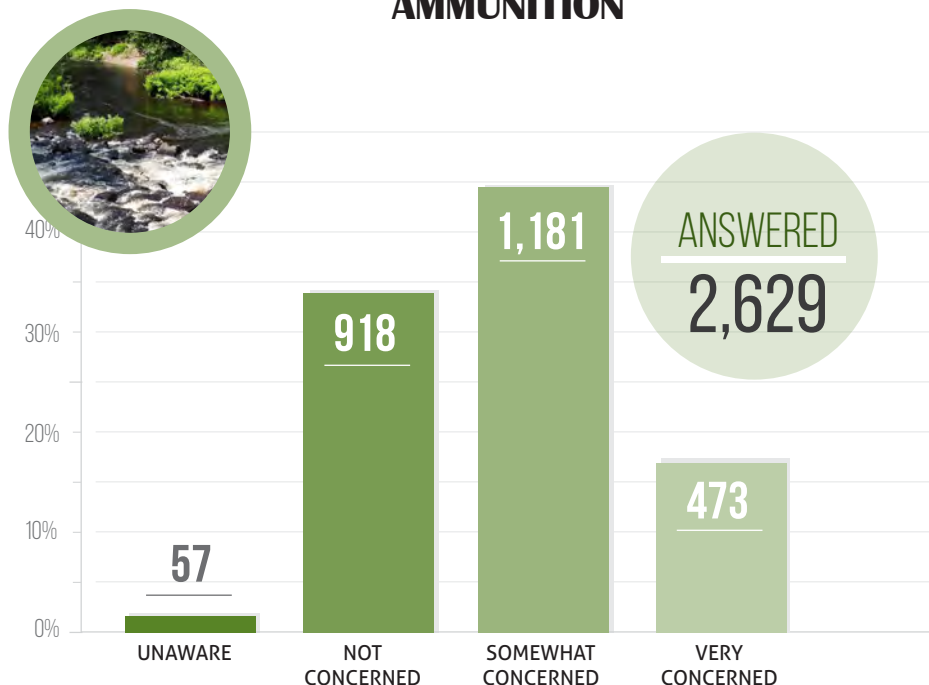
## EFFECTS OF LEAD SINKERS AND JIGS ON WILDLIFE



## EFFECTS OF LEAD SINKERS AND JIGS ON FISH



## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF LEAD AMMUNITION



Justinhoffmanoutdoors | Dreamstime.com

## WHAT SOME SURVEY RESPONDENTS ARE SAYING:

**“If studies are proving that lead is having a negative impact on our fisheries and wildlife we should make changes.”**

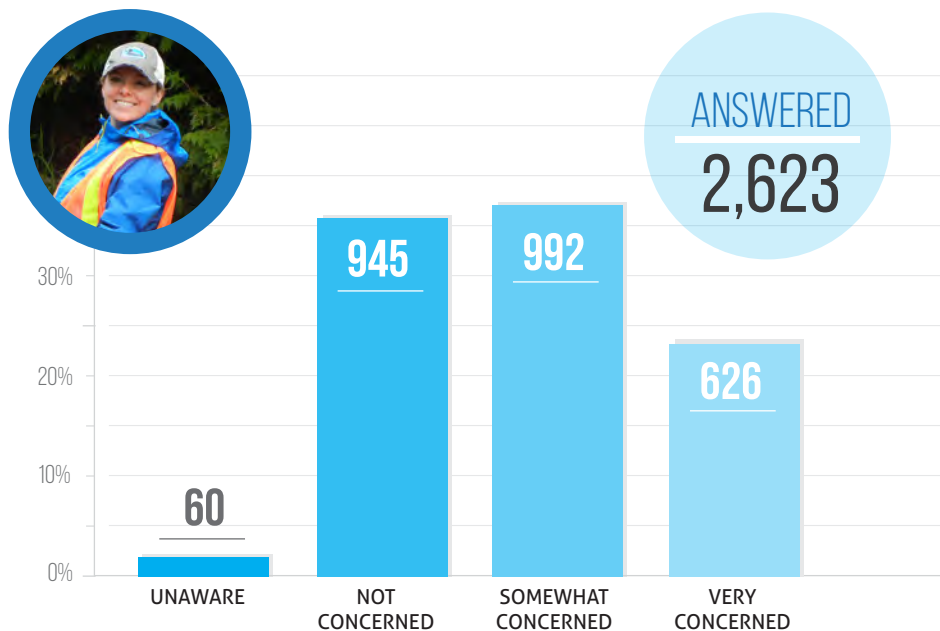
.....

**“Any animal I hunt to eat I would prefer to use lead free ammo. Lead ammo is crucial for the thousands of rounds a year I shoot in training and competition.”**

.....

**“If the science says it’s causing measurable harm then I support change. If change is coming because of a political agenda that is starving for a win then I will be less than supportive.”**

## HUMAN HEALTH IMPACTS OF LEAD AMMUNITION

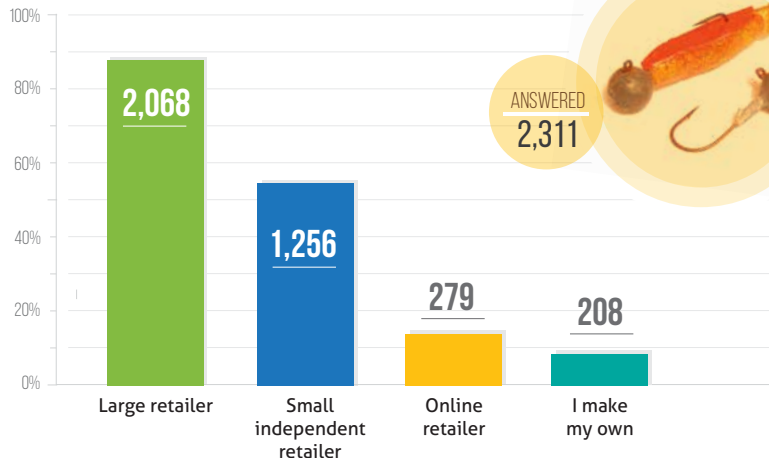


## AVAILABILITY OF LEAD-FREE ALTERNATIVES

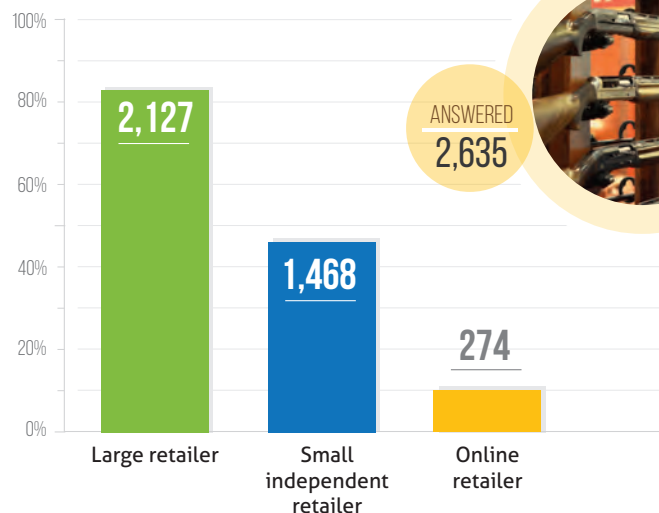
Respondents reported that the current availability of lead-free alternatives is limited at certain retailers. Overall, **52.2%** of respondents rated the availability of lead-free ammunition as “poor” or “very poor”.

In our response to ECCC’s proposal about “moving towards” lead-free ammunition and tackle, we stressed that lead-free alternatives must be easily available where anglers, hunters, and shooters shop.

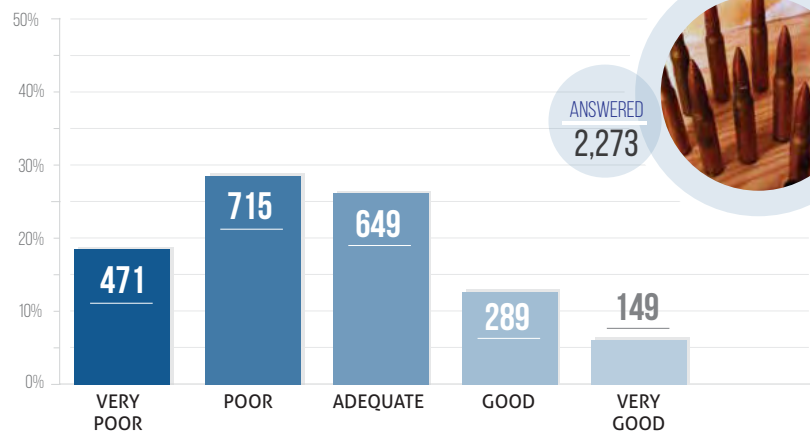
## WHERE DO YOU CURRENTLY PURCHASE YOUR SINKERS AND JIGS?



## WHERE DO YOU CURRENTLY PURCHASE AMMUNITION OR RELOADING COMPONENTS?



## PLEASE RATE THE AVAILABILITY OF LEAD-FREE AMMUNITION



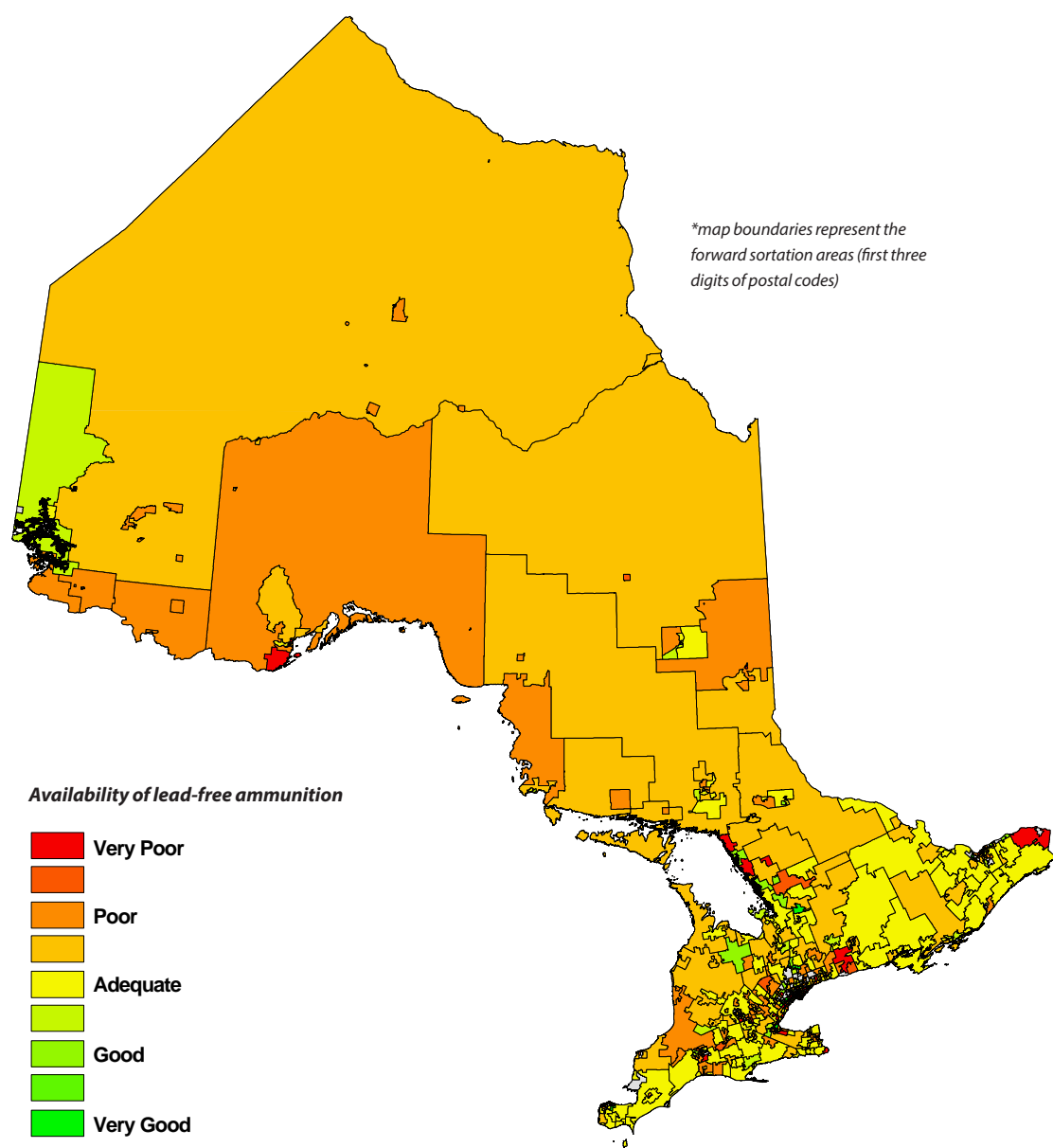
### SURVEY RESPONDENT SAYS:

**“If lead free alternatives are widely available at reasonable prices I would consider trying it.”**



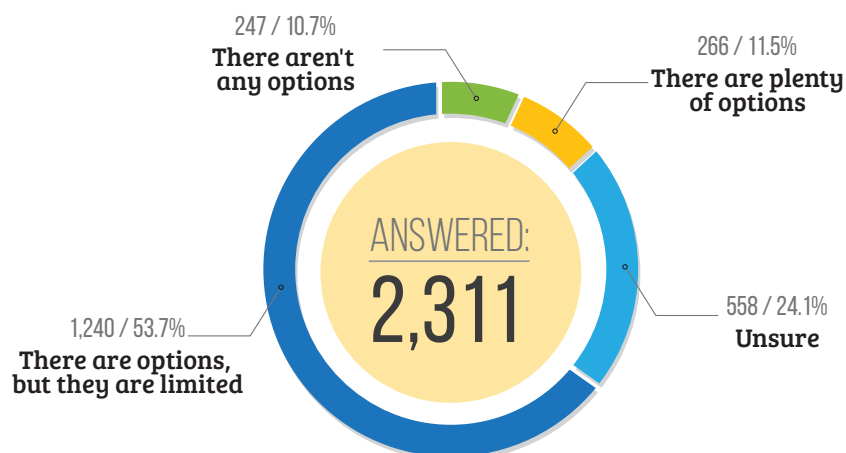
When mapped based on the **2,119** respondents who provided their area code information, regional differences in availability become apparent.

Respondents north of the French and Mattawa Rivers reported significantly lower lead-free ammunition availability than those living in areas overlapping or south of the rivers.



When asked how they feel about the current availability of lead-free options for sinkers and/or jigs, the top two responses were “there are options, but they are limited” (**53.7%**) or “unsure” (**24.1%**). These responses indicate that while the tackle industry is finding new materials that perform better than lead for certain applications, angler perception of the availability of lead-free alternatives is poor.

## HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE CURRENT AVAILABILITY OF LEAD-FREE OPTIONS FOR SINKERS AND/OR JIGS?



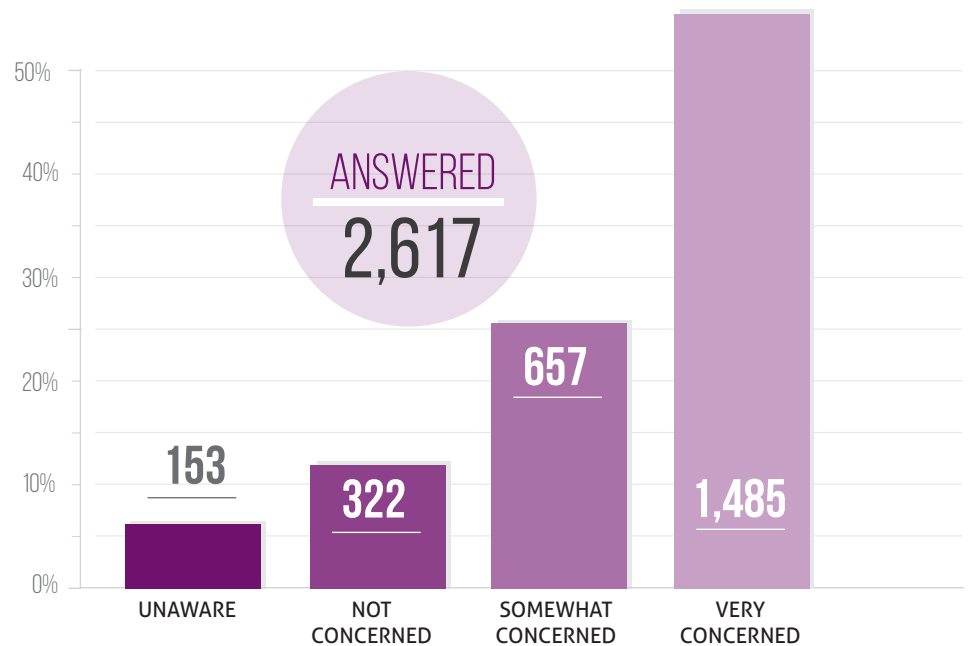
## **BARRIERS TO SWITCHING TO LEAD-FREE ALTERNATIVES**

Anglers, hunters, and sport shooters have several valid concerns about switching to lead-free alternatives, with the most common response to all the questions shown in the charts below being “very concerned”. Any one of the following can be a barrier to moving towards lead-free ammunition and tackle.

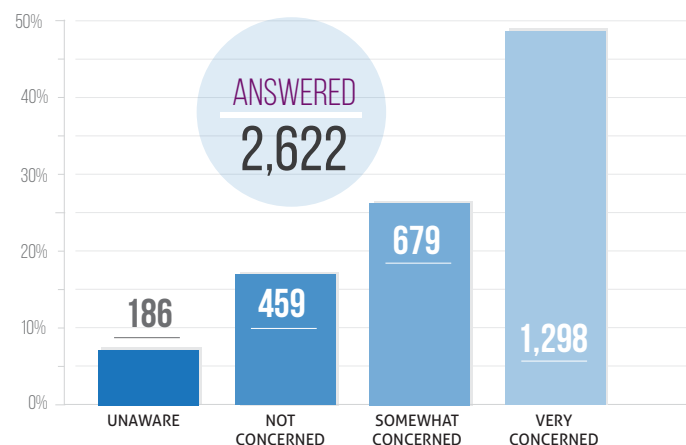
Lead-free ammunition is substantially more expensive than lead. Hunters and shooters already invest significant amounts in their activities and further costs may negatively affect their participation.

The different properties of steel, bismuth, tungsten, and copper relative to lead mean that in some cases lead-free alternatives cannot be used in older firearms or will offer inferior performance compared to lead. These concerns were reflected in respondents’ answers.

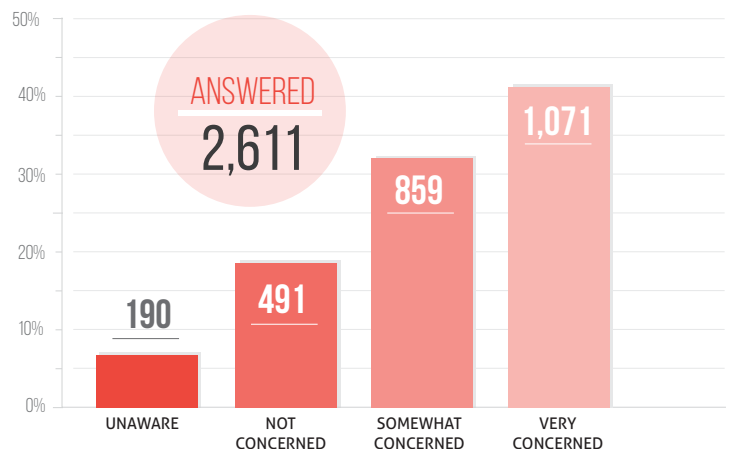
### **PRICE OF LEAD-FREE AMMUNITION**



### **COMPATIBILITY OF LEAD-FREE AMMUNITION WITH OLDER FIREARMS**

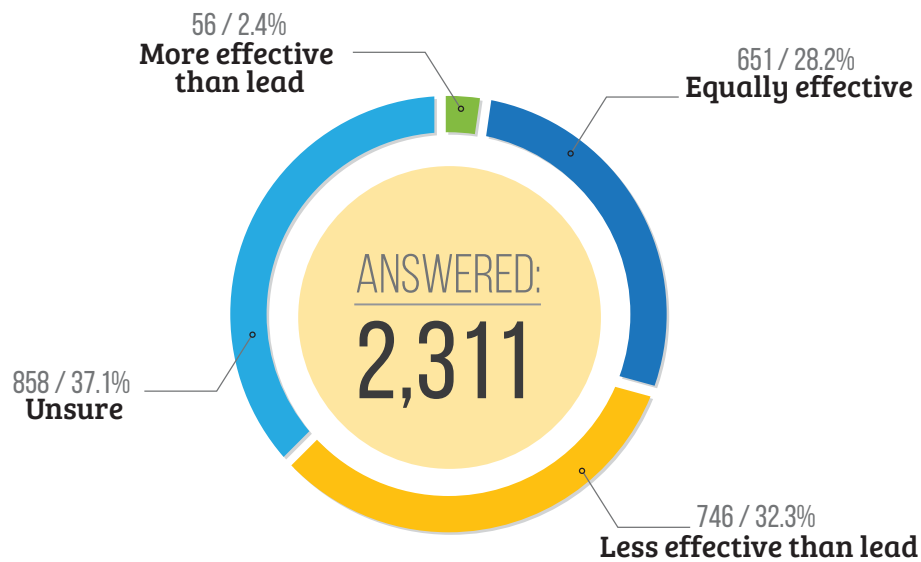


### **PERFORMANCE OF LEAD-FREE AMMUNITION**



Angler respondents expressed similar concerns regarding the effectiveness of lead-free sinkers and jigs.

## HOW WOULD YOU RANK THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEAD-FREE SINKERS AND JIGS?



### WHAT SOME SURVEY RESPONDENTS ARE SAYING:

**“For hunting, lead free alternatives are very hard to find and the cost is outrageous. Outside of the fact I would have to modify my guns.”**

.....

**“My main concern would be what material could replace lead for traditional muzzle loader shooting and work well.”**

.....

**“It’s always a question of availability, effectiveness and cost!”**

.....

**“Cost is the main deterrent of this change. If we could bring the cost down we would be lead free already.”**





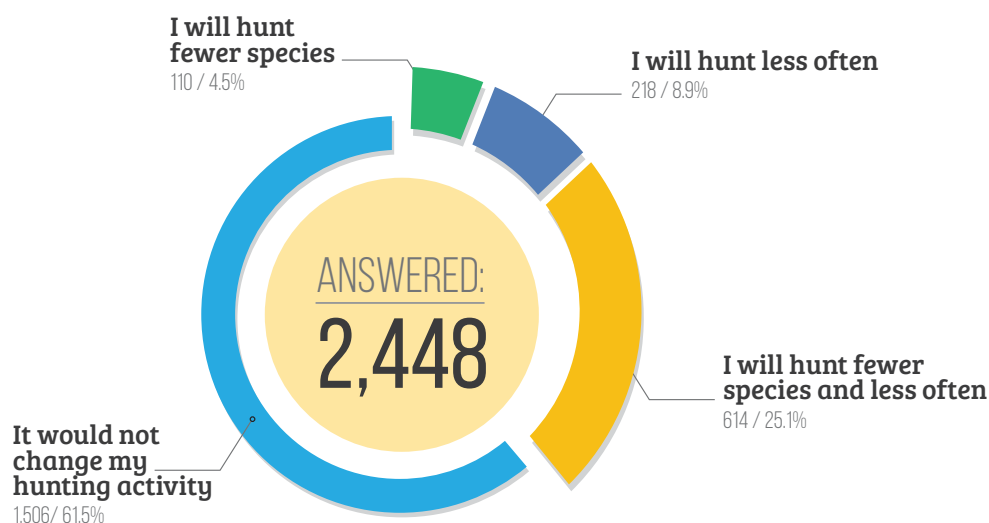
## **IMPACTS OF A PARTIAL OR FULL BAN**

Bans on the use of lead for angling, hunting and shooting have been implemented in several jurisdictions around the world.

The effect of bans on participation in these activities is debated, but survey respondents were clearly concerned that such a ban in Ontario would have a negative effect.

Over **38.5%** of respondents who hunt said that a partial or full ban on lead ammunition would decrease their hunting activity.

### **IF YOU ARE A HUNTER, HOW WOULD A PARTIAL OR FULL BAN ON LEAD AMMUNITION CHANGE YOUR HUNTING ACTIVITY?**



This effect was even more pronounced among respondents who are recreational or competitive shooters. This result is not surprising, due to the significant amount of ammunition used annually by shooters.

### **IF YOU ARE A RECREATIONAL/COMPETITIVE SHOOTER, WOULD A PARTIAL OR FULL BAN ON LEAD AMMUNITION REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF SHOOTING THAT YOU DO?**



## WHAT SOME SURVEY RESPONDENTS ARE SAYING:

**“It would be prohibitively expensive to use non lead alternatives for target clays shooting. We would see a drop of over 70-percent of clay target shooting and put an end to the competitive shooting.”**

.....

**“My biggest concern is that my older firearms will not be compatible and if they aren’t I will no longer hunt as I’m too old to replace them all now.”**

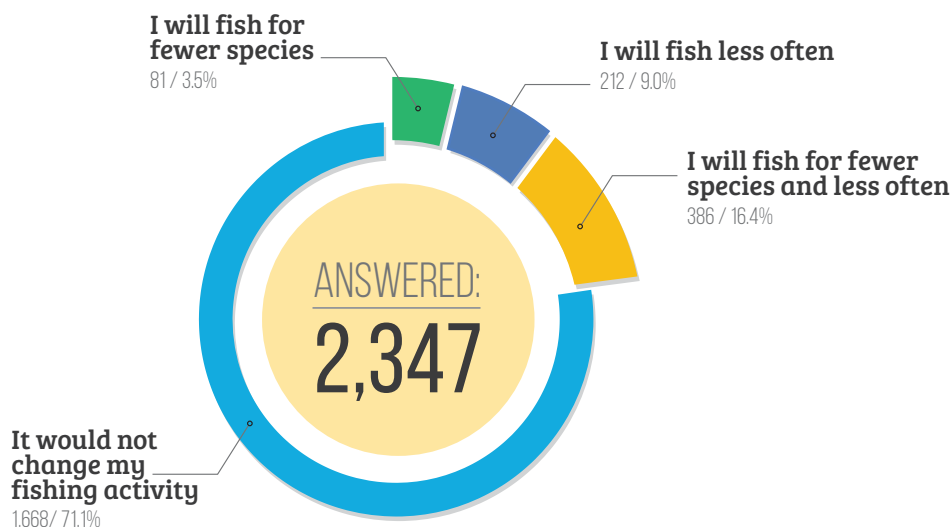
.....

**“When they brought out steel shot just about everybody I know quit hunting migratory game birds.”**

Alexey Stiop | Dreamstime.com

There was a similar reported effect among angler respondents with **28.9%** saying a ban on lead sinkers and jigs would decrease their angling activity.

## HOW WOULD A PARTIAL OR FULL BAN ON LEAD SINKERS AND JIGS CHANGE YOUR FISHING ACTIVITY?



The survey only asked anglers about the effect of a ban on lead sinkers and jigs; however, ECCC is discussing “moving towards lead-free tackle”. Given that one-third of angling respondents said that **75%** or more of their tackle contains lead, a ban on all lead tackle would likely further decrease angling participation.

## CONCLUSION

Anglers, hunters, and sport shooters are a diverse group in terms of activities and equipment use. We use lead in a variety of different ways and respondents expressed a high degree of concern related to the effects of lead on the environment and human health.

At the same time, the results of our survey clearly indicate that there are significant barriers to eliminating the use of lead - **the availability, cost, and performance of lead-free alternatives must be improved significantly if Canada aims to reduce lead use by the outdoors community.** Any regulations that result in decreased participation in angling, hunting, and shooting will negatively affect conservation work, which is funded directly through licence fees and indirectly by the volunteer conservation efforts of the community.

The OFAH issued this survey to gain a better understanding of how the angling, hunting and shooting communities feel about these proposed initiatives. The responses from this survey were directly incorporated into our submission to ECCC, which can be found at: **[www.ofah.org/lead](http://www.ofah.org/lead)**.

We would like to thank everyone who participated in this survey. Your input will allow us to advocate more effectively and to ensure that the concerns of the outdoors community are given due consideration by the Government of Canada.

Questions regarding the survey findings of the survey or OFAH's submission to ECCC can be addressed to Lauren Tonelli ([lauren\\_tonelli@ofah.org](mailto:lauren_tonelli@ofah.org)).

