



## **BIG RIDEAU LAKE ASSOCIATION (BRLA)**

### **2003 FISH LEAD FREE REPORT**

The health of Rideau Lake's loon populations has always been a concern for residents of the lake, and one of the priorities for the Big Rideau Lake Association. Every year, loons and other water birds die needlessly of lead poisoning after swallowing a lead sinker or jig that they find at the bottom of the lake. Anglers use these to weigh their lure, hook or bait into the water. Sinkers and jigs may accidentally detach from their line and fall into the water, or the hook or line may become tangled and the line may break or be cut by the angler. By educating anglers on the negative effects of lead sinkers and jigs and by providing a free lead-free alternative, anglers will help to limit the amount of lead in the Rideau lake.

For several years BRLA has sponsored a *Take A Little Lead Out!* tackle exchange program and in 2003 changed the name to FISH Lead FREE to coincide with the Environment Canada/Canadian Wildlife Service's program of the same name. We also contracted with the Centre for Sustainable Watersheds to develop FISH Lead FREE display kits for four locations around the lake in order to enhance our exchange and educational programs.

Each kit included a floor display, Environment Canada/Canadian Wildlife Service's FISH Lead FREE brochures and a supply of lead-free tackle. The displays were placed in Dry Dock, Portland, Len's Cove Marina, Portland, Maple Crest Cabins and Motel, Rideau Ferry; and Murphy's Point Provincial Park.

Comments about the program have been positive and it is apparent that anglers are willing to try the tackle. This has proven to be an important educational program which will be continued in 2004.

These displays will continue to be maintained by Big Rideau Lake Association volunteers. We welcome visitors at each of the named locations or questions to [environment@brla.on.ca](mailto:environment@brla.on.ca)

