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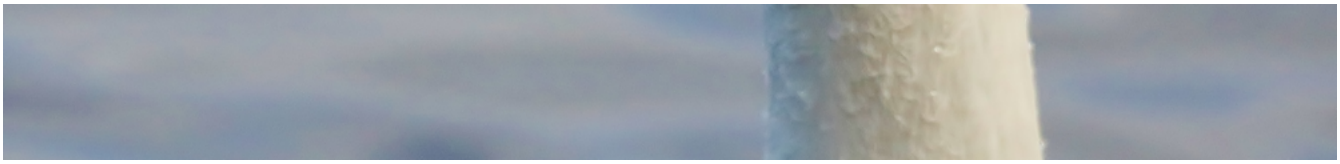
EU-wide lead shot ban moves closer after Parliament vote

Plans to ban lead gunshot across the European Union have cleared a major parliamentary hurdle after MEPs rejected attempts to block the proposed restriction on 8 October.

The measure, developed under the EU's REACH chemicals framework, would extend existing restrictions on lead shot in wetlands to all habitats, including farmland, woodland and other terrestrial environments. It would also apply to outdoor sport shooting, with a seven-year transition period to allow hunters, shooting grounds and suppliers to move to alternatives.

Lead shot has been prohibited in and around wetlands across EU member states since February 2023. However, shooting continues to disperse large quantities of lead across the wider landscape, where birds can ingest pellets while collecting grit or consume fragments in shot quarry and discarded remains.





(/gallery/birds/cygnus-columbianus-bewickii/1221889)

MEPs have rejected attempts to block restrictions on lead gunshot across all habitats, extending protection beyond wetlands, although a seven-year transition is planned (Clive Daelman).

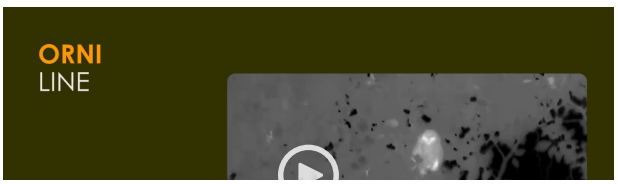
Boost for Bewick's

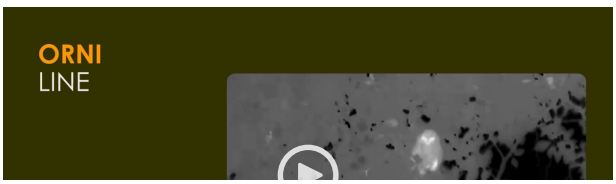
BirdLife Europe and Central Asia, which has campaigned for the wider ban, estimates that more than 44,000 tonnes of lead enter the environment annually through shooting, hunting and fishing across the EU. At least 92 bird species are considered at risk from lead exposure, with waterbirds, gamebirds and scavenging raptors among those affected.

Species potentially benefitting include Bewick's Swan (/species/redirect/21020), Grey Partridge (/species/redirect/21999), Red Kite (/species/redirect/23732), Golden Eagle (/species/redirect/23476), White-tailed Eagle (/species/redirect/23752) and Bearded Vulture (/species/redirect/23261). Lead poisoning can occur when birds ingest spent shot, while predators and scavengers may be exposed through contaminated carcasses.

The parliamentary vote does not mean the ban takes effect immediately. It clears a significant stage in the process towards formal adoption and implementation. Once in force, the restriction is expected to cover the EU, European Economic Area and Northern Ireland.

The proposal does not include lead bullets, leaving a separate source of ammunition-related contamination unaddressed. BirdLife has called for further action on bullets.











Orni line | Pulsar WildLife



Lumion line| Pulsar WildLife



Thermal Meets Color: Picture-in-Picture | Pulsar Avilume



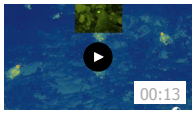
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