



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

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#### **Alabama Department of Public Health issues fish consumption advisories**

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Concern about protecting the public from possible health exposure to mercury from eating fish led to the issuance of several new fish consumption advisories for bodies of water in Alabama, while other advisories were removed. The quality of water in Alabama generally continues improvements made in recent years.

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management collected samples of specific fish species for analysis from various waterbodies throughout the state during the fall of 2005. The Alabama Department of Public Health assessed the results to determine potential human health effects.

Fish consumption advisories are issued for specific waterbodies and specific species taken from those areas. The advisories apply to waters as far as a boat can be taken upstream in a tributary, that is, to full pool elevations.

This year the Department of Public Health, in consultation with the departments of Conservation and Natural Resources and Environmental Management, decided to shift to a more protective level. Mercury, which occurs both naturally and from man-made sources, can cause developmental disabilities and behavioral problems in children if it is consumed at high levels.

One way to minimize exposure in populations at risk is to reduce mercury derived from eating fish from contaminated water. These populations include women of childbearing age, pregnant women, and children younger than 15 years of age. These advisories are based on a stricter action level for mercury developed by the Environmental Protection Agency. Previously, Food and Drug Administration guidelines were used for mercury advisories. The FDA level was based on eating one fish meal per week.

Beginning with the 2006 advisories the Department of Public Health adopted a contaminant level for mercury in fish that would protect those who eat more than one fish meal per week. The new EPA standards are four times more protective. This advisory will be represented as the safe number of meals of that fish that can be eaten in a given period of time, such as meals per week, meals per month or no consumption. A meal portion consists of 6 ounces of cooked fish and 8 ounces of raw fish.

During a period of transition in which the method of collection and processing fish for analysis is changing, all previously issued advisories are to remain in effect for this year.

New **Consumption Advisories were issued** for the nine bodies of water described here.

**New Advisories for 2006**

Bear Creek Reservoir – Franklin County  
Dam forebay area  
Largemouth bass  
Contaminant –Mercury  
Consumption level - One meal per month

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Bilbo Creek – Washington County  
Upstream of the confluence with the Tombigbee River  
Largemouth bass  
Consumption level - One meal per month  
Contaminant – Mercury

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Cedar Creek – Houston County  
Cedar Creek drainage from American Brass site near Headland tributary to Omussee Creek  
Largemouth bass  
Contaminant – Mercury  
Consumption level - Two meals per month

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Claiborne Reservoir – Monroe/Clarke counties  
Dam forebay area and in vicinity of Lower Peachtree Access Area, approx. River Mile 96 close to the intersection of Clarke, Monroe and Wilcox counties  
Contaminant – Mercury  
Consumption level - Two meals per month

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Cowpen Creek – Baldwin County  
Upstream of confluence with Fish River  
Largemouth bass  
Contaminant – Mercury  
Consumption level - One meal per month

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Escatawpa River – Mobile County  
At U.S. Highway 98 bridge crossing approximately 1/10 mile upstream of AL/MS State Line  
Spotted Bass, Largemouth bass  
Contaminant – Mercury  
Consumption level - One meal per 2 months (or one-half meal per month) for spotted

bass  
One meal per month for largemouth bass

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Fish River – Baldwin County  
In vicinity of confluence with Polecat Creek approximately one mile upstream of County Rd. 32 Bridge  
Largemouth bass  
Contaminant – Mercury  
Consumption level - One meal per 2 months (or one-half meal per month)

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Fish River – Baldwin County  
Approximately two miles upstream of U.S. 98 Bridge in the vicinity of Waterhole Branch/Fish River confluence just above the two islands  
Largemouth bass  
Contaminant – Mercury  
Consumption level - Two meals per month

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Perdido River – Baldwin County  
Near confluence with Styx River in vicinity of U.S. Highway 90 bridge crossing  
Largemouth bass  
Contaminant – Mercury  
Consumption level - One meal per month for largemouth bass  
Two meals per month for River Redhorse

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-----Polecat Creek  
– Baldwin County  
Upstream of confluence with Fish River  
Largemouth bass  
Contaminant – Mercury  
Consumption level - One meal per month

A **No Consumption Advisory was removed** for crappie, blue catfish and spotted bass taken from the Coosa River at Lay Reservoir. Sample results indicate the levels of PCBs in these fish have been below advisory levels for several sampling seasons. Also advisories for catfish and crappie from Lake Logan Martin have been removed on these species.

The no consumption advisory for striped bass, however, remains in effect for both Lay Reservoir and the Logan Martin Dam forebay area and the area in the vicinity of State Highway 34 bridge (Stemley Bridge).

Fish from the following sites were analyzed and found to contain no contaminants at levels that required posting of advisories. **Fish from these bodies of water can be consumed with no restrictions:** Bon Secour, Weeks, Perdido and Wolf bays and the Magnolia River (Baldwin County), Dannelly Reservoir (Wilcox County), Mobile Bay and River, Dog River, Portersville Bay, Heron Bay, Theodore Ship Canal and Three Mile

Creek (Mobile County), Jones Bluff Reservoir (Autauga County), Jordan Reservoir, Yates Reservoir and Martin Reservoir (Elmore County), Mitchell Reservoir (Chilton County), Neely Henry Reservoir (Calhoun and Etowah counties), R.L. Harris Reservoir (Randolph County), and Tombigbee River (Sumter County).

Fish were analyzed for up to 25 different materials including contaminants in the water (PCBs, including dioxins), pesticides (endosulfan, hexachlorobenzene, chlordane, lindane, dieldrin, endrin, DDT and its breakdown products and congeners, heptachlors, Mirex, chlorpyrifos, and toxaphene), and heavy metals (arsenic, cadmium, mercury and selenium) to which the fish may have been exposed.

In addition, fish were examined for body appearance, lipid content, age and weight. Fish are good indicators of the health of a waterbody. Some contaminants could bioaccumulate in fish. The contaminant could enter the food supply through either crustaceans or bottom feeding fish in a given area. These species would be eaten by larger or more aggressive species, thereby transferring the contaminant from the species consumed to the larger species.

The advice contained in this release and complete listings of the posted fish consumption advisories (<http://www.adph.org>) is offered as guidance to individuals who wish to eat fish they catch from various waterbodies throughout the state. No regulations ban the consumption of any of the fish caught within the state, nor is there a risk of an acute toxic episode that could result from consuming any of the fish containing the contaminants for which the state has conducted analyses.

7/27/06

*SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:*

A **No Consumption Advisory** issued for any species is interpreted to mean that the fish sampled have been analyzed to show the presence of a contaminant in excess of FDA advisory levels. Consumption of any fish of this type from a specific waterbody may place the consumer at risk for harm from the contaminant. If an advisory had been issued for largemouth bass and not for channel catfish or black crappie, it would be advised that individuals should eat no largemouth bass, but consumption of channel catfish or black crappie is permissible without endangering health.

The intent of a **Limited Consumption Advisory** is for women of childbearing age and children (less than 15 years of age) to refrain from consumption of any fish indicated under this advisory. All other individuals should limit their consumption of the particular species to one meal per month.

For example, the FDA tolerance level for PCBs is calculated to protect people who consume one meal of fish a month throughout their lifetime. Individuals who eat these fish more frequently or for many years place themselves at greater risk. Individuals who eat these fish only once each month or less frequently are at less risk.

PCBs are listed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as "probable human carcinogens." This listing is used for chemicals that have been found to cause cancer in laboratory animals but have not been shown to cause cancer in humans. PCBs have also been associated with a skin disorder known as chloracne as well as changes in cholesterol and triglyceride levels in human blood.

Women of childbearing age and children should not consume any of these fish on which a **Limited** or **No Consumption Advisory** exists.

The following advisories, issued in previous years, remain in effect:

Subsequent sampling and analysis will render the advisories in the meal per month format.

***BODY OF WATER / PORTION / TYPE OF ADVISORY / CONTAMINANT***

(See notes at end of table.)

Big Escambia Creek  
At the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Bridge Crossing  
Do not consume largemouth bass  
Contaminant - Mercury

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Blackwater Creek - Baldwin County  
In the area between the mouth of the river and the pipeline crossing southeast of  
Robertsdale  
Do not consume largemouth bass  
Contaminant - Mercury

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Blackwater Creek - Escambia County  
Between the County Road 4 bridge and the Alabama/Florida state line  
Do not consume largemouth bass  
Contaminant - Mercury

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Bon Secour River  
Vicinity of County Road 10 bridge  
Do not consume largemouth bass  
Contaminant - Mercury

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Chickasaw Creek  
Entire creek  
Do not consume largemouth bass  
Contaminant - Mercury

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Choccolocco Creek  
Entire length of creek from south of Oxford to Logan Martin Lake  
Do not consume any fish  
Contaminant - PCBs

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Cold Creek Swamp  
From confluence of Cold Creek with the Mobile River west through the swamp  
Do not consume any fish  
Contaminant - Mercury

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Conecuh River  
At Pollard Landing approximately 8.6 miles downstream of the paper mill  
Do not consume largemouth bass  
Contaminant - Mercury

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Coosa River  
Between Neely Henry Dam and Riverside  
Limited consumption of catfish over 1 pound  
Contaminant - PCBs

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Coosa River  
Between Riverside and Logan Martin Dam  
Do not consume striped bass  
Contaminant – PCBs

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Coosa River  
Between Logan Martin Dam and the railroad tracks crossing the Coosa near Vincent  
Do not consume striped bass  
Contaminant - PCBs

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Coosa River  
Lay Lake between Logan Martin Dam and Lay Dam  
Do not consume striped bass  
Contaminant - PCBs

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Coosa River  
In upper Lay Reservoir approximately two miles downstream of Logan Martin Dam and  
one half mile downstream from the Kelly Creek - Coosa River Confluence in the vicinity  
of Ratcliff/Elliott Island.  
Limited consumption of spotted bass  
Contaminant - PCBs

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Fowl River  
Entire River  
Do not consume largemouth bass  
Contaminant - Mercury

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Gulf Coast  
Entire coast  
Do not consume king mackerel over 39 inches  
Limited consumption of king mackerel under 39 inches  
Contaminant - Mercury

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Huntsville Spring Branch & Indian Creek  
From Redstone Arsenal to the Tennessee River  
Do not consume smallmouth or bigmouth buffalofish  
Contaminant - DDT

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Little Escambia Creek  
In Escambia County at U.S. Highway 31/29 Bridge  
Do not consume spotted bass  
Contaminant - Mercury

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Mobile River  
At and south of the confluence with Cold Creek  
Do not consume largemouth bass  
Contaminant - Mercury

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Opossum Creek  
From the Pumping Station to the confluence with Valley Creek  
Do not consume largemouth bass  
Contaminant - Mercury

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Styx River  
Entire River  
Do not consume largemouth bass  
Limited consumption of channel catfish  
Contaminant - Mercury

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Tensaw River  
Entire River  
Limited consumption of largemouth bass  
Contaminant - Mercury

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Three Mile Creek  
Downstream of railroad trestle down to 1 mile upstream of confluence with the Mobile River  
No consumption of Atlantic croaker  
Limited consumption of striped bass and speckled trout  
Contaminant - Chlordane

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Valley Creek  
Around the confluence with Opossum Creek  
Do not consume largemouth bass  
Contaminant - Mercury

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Yellow River  
At County Road 4 bridge crossing approximately 1.5 miles upstream of Alabama/Florida line  
Do not consume largemouth bass  
Contaminant - Mercury

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\* Everyone should avoid eating the species of fish listed in the defined area.

\*\* A **Limited Consumption Advisory** states that women of reproductive age and children less than 15 years old should avoid eating certain fish from these areas. Other people should limit their consumption of the particular species to one meal per month. A meal is considered to be 6 ounces of cooked fish or 8 ounces of raw fish.