



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

RSA Tower 201 Monroe Street, Suite 914 Montgomery, AL 36104
Phone 334-206-5300 Fax 334-206-5520

www.adph.org

Alabama Department of Public Health issues 2008 Fish Consumption Advisories

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Neil L. Sass, Ph.D.
(334) 206-5973

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 one other advisory was removed. The quality of water, based upon the levels of contaminants in fish from the waters in Alabama, generally continues improvements made in recent years.

The Alabama Department of Public Health annually updates fish consumption advisories based on data collected the preceding fall by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management.

ADEM collected samples of specific fish species for analysis from various waterbodies throughout the state during the fall of 2007. The Alabama Department of Public Health assessed the analytical results to determine whether any of the tested contaminants in the fish may give rise to potential human health effects.

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

Beginning with the 2007 advisories the Department of Public Health adopted a contaminant level for mercury in fish that would protect those who might consider eating more than one fish meal per week. The new U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards are four times more protective. Newly issued advisories 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 or 8 ounces of raw fish.

All advisories previously issued using Food and Drug Administration guidelines remain in effect for this year (2008) and other advisories have been updated to reflect the EPA consumption levels.

New consumption advisories were issued for the 12 bodies of water, locations or species described here:

New Advisories for 2008

Choccolocco Creek – Calhoun County
In the vicinity of Boiling Springs Road bridge crossing
Spotted bass
Contaminant – Mercury
Consumption level– Two meals per month

Choccolocco Creek - Talladega County
In the vicinity of County Road 399 bridge
Spotted bass
Contaminant – Mercury
Consumption level – One meal per month

Choctawhatchee River – Geneva County
Entire river
Spotted bass, Redear sunfish
Contaminant –Mercury
Consumption level – Two meals per month

Frank Jackson Lake - Covington County
Lightwood Knot Creek, Frank Jackson Lake lake-wide, Opp
Largemouth bass
Contaminant – Mercury
Consumption level - One meal per month

Lake Jackson - Covington County
Lake Jackson located on the Alabama/Florida state line at Florala
Largemouth bass
Contaminant – Mercury
Consumption level - One meal per month

Lewis Smith Reservoir - Cullman County
Ryan Creek, Lewis Smith Reservoir in the vicinity of Cullman County Road 222 bridge
Largemouth bass
Contaminant – Mercury
Consumption level - One meal per month

Lewis Smith Reservoir - Winston County
Rock Creek, Lewis Smith Reservoir in vicinity of Little Crooked Creek and Rock Creek
Marina, approximately 5 miles upstream from Sipsey Fork
Largemouth bass
Contaminant – Mercury
Consumption level – Two meals per month
Lewis Smith Reservoir mouth of Clear Creek, mouth of Butler Creek
Contaminant - Mercury
Consumption Level - 1 meal per month

North River - Tuscaloosa County
Upstream of Lake Tuscaloosa, immediately upstream of Bull Slough Road
Largemouth bass

Contaminant – Mercury
Consumption level - Two meals per month

Pea River – Geneva County
Entire river
Largemouth bass
Contaminant – Mercury
Consumption level – Two meals per month

Sepulga River - Escambia County
Sepulga River upstream of Conecuh River confluence
Spotted bass
Contaminant – Mercury
Consumption level - One meal per month

Lake Tuscaloosa - Tuscaloosa County
Largemouth bass
All species
Contaminant – Mercury
Consumption level - One meal per month

A No Consumption Advisory was removed for Atlantic croaker, striped bass and speckled trout taken from the Three Mile Creek downstream from the Southern Railroad trestle to the confluence with the Mobile River in Mobile County. Sample results indicate the levels of chlordane in these fish have been below advisory levels for several sampling seasons and the fish are safe to consume.

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: Alabama River (Monroe and Dallas counties); Bankhead and Holt reservoirs (Tuscaloosa County); Black Warrior Locust Fork, Village and Valley creeks (Jefferson County); Black Warrior, Mulberry Fork and Lost Creek (Walker County); Big Yellow Creek (Tuscaloosa County); Cahaba River (Bibb and Shelby counties); Demopolis Reservoir (Marengo County); Tombigbee River (Choctaw County) and Warrior Lake (Tuscaloosa 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>) are 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.

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 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 EPA 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 render the advisories in the meal per month format.

BODY OF WATER / PORTION / TYPE OF ADVISORY / CONTAMINANT
(See notes at end of table.)

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

Big Escambia Creek – Escambia County
At the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Bridge Crossing
Largemouth bass
Contaminant – Mercury

Consumption level – One meal per month

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

Blackwater River – Baldwin County
In the area between the mouth of the river and the pipeline crossing southeast of
Robertsdale
Largemouth bass
Contaminant - Mercury
Consumption level – One meal per two months (1/2 meal per month)
Blacktail redhorse
Contaminant – Mercury
Consumption level – Two meals per month

Blackwater River – Escambia County
Between the County Road 4 bridge and the Alabama/Florida state line
Spotted bass
Contaminant – Mercury
Consumption level – One meal per month

Bon Secour River – Baldwin County
Vicinity of County Road 10 Bridge
Contaminant – Mercury
Do not consume largemouth bass

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

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

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

Chocolocco Creek – Calhoun, Talladega counties
Entire length of creek from south of Oxford to Logan Martin Lake
Contaminant - PCBs
Do not consume any fish

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

Conecuh River – Escambia County
From Alabama/Florida state line to Sepulga River including Murder Creek and Burnt Corn
Creek tributaries
Contaminant - Mercury
Consumption level - Two meals per month

Coosa River – Calhoun, St. Clair, Talladega counties
Between Neely Henry Dam and Riverside
Contaminant - PCBs
Limited consumption of catfish over 1 pound

Coosa River – St. Clair, Talladega counties
Between Riverside and Logan Martin Dam
Contaminant – PCBs
Do not consume striped bass

Coosa River – Shelby, St. Clair, Talladega counties
Between Logan Martin Dam and the railroad tracks crossing the Coosa near Vincent
Contaminant - PCBs
Do not consume striped bass

Coosa River – Chilton, Coosa, Shelby, St. Clair, Talladega counties
Lay Lake between Logan Martin Dam and Lay Dam
Contaminant - PCBs
Do not consume striped bass

Coosa River – St. Clair County
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.
Contaminant - PCBs
Limited consumption of spotted bass

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

Escatawpa River – Mobile County
At U.S. Highway 98 bridge crossing approximately 1/10 mile upstream of Alabama /Miss.
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

Fish River – Baldwin County

In vicinity of confluence with Polecat Creek approximately one mile upstream of County Road 32 bridge

Largemouth bass

Contaminant – Mercury

Consumption level - One meal per 2 months (or one-half meal per month)

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

Fowl River – Mobile County

Mobile County in vicinity of Muddy Creek confluence and Fowl River Road bridge

Largemouth bass

Contaminant - Mercury

Consumption level - 1/2 meal per month (one meal per two months)

Gulf Coast – Baldwin, Mobile counties

Entire coast

Do not consume king mackerel over 39 inches

Contaminant - Mercury

Limited consumption of king mackerel under 39 inches

Huntsville Spring Branch & Indian Creek – Madison County

From Redstone Arsenal to the Tennessee River

Contaminant - DDT

Do not consume smallmouth or bigmouth buffalofish

Little Escambia Creek – Escambia County

In Escambia County at U.S. Highway 31/29 Bridge

Contaminant – Mercury

Consumption level - One meal per month for largemouth bass

Mobile River – Mobile County

At and south of the confluence with Cold Creek

Contaminant - Mercury

Do not consume largemouth bass

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

Polecat Creek – Baldwin County

Upstream of confluence with Fish River

Largemouth bass

Contaminant – Mercury
Consumption level - One meal per month

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

Styx River – Baldwin County
Styx River near its confluence with Perdido River in vicinity of US 90 bridge crossing
Contaminant – Mercury
Consumption level - One meal per month for largemouth bass
Limited consumption of channel catfish

Tensaw River – Baldwin County
Entire river
Contaminant - Mercury
Limited consumption of largemouth bass

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

Yellow River – Covington County
At County Road 4 bridge crossing approximately 1.5 miles upstream of
Alabama/Florida line
Contaminant – Mercury
Consumption level - One meal per month for Largemouth bass
- One meal per month for Spotted bass

* 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.