



Illinois River No Longer Under “Do Not Eat” Fish Advisory

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) today announced an updated consumption advisory for sport fish caught in Illinois waters, including Lake Michigan. These changes are the result of continued sampling by the Fish Contaminant Monitoring Program (FCMP).

Fish consumption advisories are based primarily on protecting sensitive populations, including women of childbearing age, pregnant women, fetuses, nursing mothers, and children younger than 15 years of age. While there is no known immediate health hazard from eating contaminated fish from any Illinois water body, there are concerns about the effects of long-term, low-level exposure to chlordane, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and methylmercury in fish.

This year, IDPH is issuing a less restrictive advisory for 13 water bodies and has removed four water bodies from the advisory list altogether. For the first time since the 1970s, there is no longer a “Do Not Eat” advisory for fish in the Illinois River due to declining PCB concentrations. However, the continued prevalence of methylmercury is responsible for new or more restrictive advisories in Illinois waters.

In addition to this year’s updates, a statewide methylmercury advisory remains in place for all Illinois waters that have not been sampled by the FCMP. The statewide methylmercury advisory cautions sensitive populations to eat no more than one meal per week of predatory fish, which pose a greater risk because they feed on other fish and accumulate higher amounts of methylmercury. Predatory fish include all species of black bass and gar, as well as striped bass, white bass, hybrid striped bass, walleye, sauger, saugeye, flathead catfish, muskellunge, and northern pike.

The Illinois FCMP is a joint effort of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), and IDPH. The fish are collected by IDNR and tested by IEPA. IDPH issues an annual fish consumption advisory based on IEPA test results. Fish advisories can be found on the IDPH website where you can view an [interactive fish advisory map](#) to learn which Illinois waters have a [special mercury advisory](#) or a [PCB or chlordane advisory](#), and find additional resources.