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*The following fish consumption advisory was issued on 02/17/22 by the Department of Health, the Department of Environmental Quality, and the Department of Wildlife & Fisheries. For more information, please contact:*

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## **FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORY FOR BAYOU DESIARD**

In response to recent sampling and analysis of fish-mercury data, the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and Department of Wildlife & Fisheries (DWF) are issuing the following advisory for Bayou DeSiard in Ouachita parish where unacceptable levels of mercury have been detected in black crappie, bowfin, and largemouth bass. The advisory area includes Bayou DeSiard from its headwaters to its confluence with the Ouachita River. **This advisory supersedes a previous advisory issued for this waterbody on May 29, 2003.**

LDH, DEQ, and DWF advise that the following precautions be taken when eating fish taken from Bayou DeSiard:


- **Women of childbearing age and children less than seven years of age should consume no more than ONE MEAL PER MONTH of bowfin (choupique, grinnel); OR should consume no more than TWO MEALS PER MONTH of black crappie (sac-à-lait) and largemouth bass combined.**
- **Other adults and children seven years of age and older should consume no more than THREE MEALS PER MONTH of bowfin (choupique, grinnel).**


Mercury is an element that occurs naturally in the environment. It is released into the environment through natural processes and human activities. Consequently, there are small

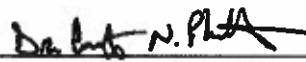
amounts of mercury in lakes, rivers, and oceans. Here, the mercury is turned into methylmercury, a form that is particularly harmful to an unborn baby or young child. Fish absorb methylmercury as they feed on aquatic organisms. Nearly all fish contain trace amounts of methylmercury. Larger fish, especially those that feed on other fish, contain more methylmercury than smaller fish. Therefore, in general, it is recommended that smaller fish be consumed instead of larger ones.

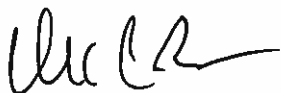
People are exposed throughout their lives to low levels of mercury. One way they can be exposed to mercury is from eating contaminated fish. Pregnant women can pass mercury from the fish they eat to their unborn babies, and nursing mothers can pass the mercury to their infants through their breast milk. Health effects from harmful levels of mercury can include nervous system and kidney damage. Developing fetuses are more sensitive to the toxic effects of mercury, especially in the first trimester of pregnancy. In addition to developing fetuses, infants and children are more sensitive to the effects of mercury; therefore, consumption advisories are issued at lower fish tissue concentration levels for these groups.

This advisory is issued as a precaution. Further sampling will be carried out by DEQ to determine the need for modifications to this advisory, including an adjustment of the boundaries if necessary. If you have consumed black crappie, bowfin, or largemouth bass from these waters, it is not likely that there is an immediate need to be concerned about the effects of mercury. However, you should consult your personal doctor if you are concerned.

  
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