



John Bel Edwards
GOVERNOR

Dr. Courtney N. Phillips
Secretary
Department of
Health
P.O. Box 629
Baton Rouge, LA
70821 - 0629

Dr. Chuck Carr Brown
Secretary
Department of
Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 4301
Baton Rouge, LA
70821- 4301

Jack Montoucet
Secretary
Department of
Wildlife & Fisheries
P.O. Box 98000
Baton Rouge, LA
70898-9000

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:

LDH
Justin Homer
(888) 293-7020

DEQ
Al Hindrichs
(225) 219-3189

DWF
Robby Maxwell
(337) 491-2575

FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORY FOR BLACK BAYOU LAKE (OUACHITA PARISH)

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 Black Bayou Lake in Ouachita parish where unacceptable levels of mercury have been detected in bowfin and largemouth bass. The advisory area includes Black Bayou Lake only. **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 Black Bayou Lake:


- **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 THREE MEALS PER MONTH of largemouth bass.**
- **Other adults and children seven years of age and older: no advisory.**

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.

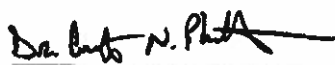
This advisory is issued as a precaution. Further sampling will be carried out by DEQ to determine the need for modifications to this advisory, including an adjustment of the boundaries if necessary. If you have consumed bowfin or largemouth bass from these waters, it is not likely that there is an immediate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



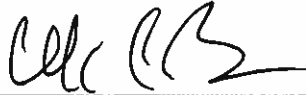
Joseph Kanter, M.D., M.P. H.
State Health Officer and Medical Director
Department of Health



Kimberly L. Hood, J.D., M.P. H.
Assistant Secretary, Office of Public Health
Department of Health



Dr. Courtney N. Phillips
Secretary
Department of Health



Chuck Carr Brown, Ph.D.
Secretary
Department of Environmental Quality



Jack Montoucet
Secretary
Department of Wildlife & Fisheries