



Jeff Landry
GOVERNOR

Ralph L. Abraham, M.D.
Secretary
Department of
Health
P.O. Box 629
Baton Rouge, LA
70821 - 0629

Aurelia S. Giacometto
Secretary
Department of
Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 4301
Baton Rouge, LA
70821- 4301

Madison D. Sheahan
Secretary
Department of
Wildlife & Fisheries
P.O. Box 98000
Baton Rouge, LA
70898-9000

The following fish consumption advisory was issued on April 17, 2024 by the Department of Health, the Department of Environmental Quality, and the Department of Wildlife & Fisheries. For more information, please contact:

LDH
Chelsea Periou
(888) 293-7020

DEQ
Kori Blitch
(866) 896 - 5337

DWF
Robby Maxwell
(337) 491-2212

FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORY FOR LAKE MAUREPAS

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 Lake Maurepas in St. John the Baptist and Livingston Parishes where unacceptable levels of mercury have been detected in: Bigmouth Buffalo, Black Crappie (Sac-a-lait), Bowfin (Choupique, Grinnel), Flathead Catfish, Freshwater Drum (Gaspergou), Largemouth Bass, Warmouth, and Yellow Bass. The advisory area includes Lake Maurepas and associated passes (North Pass and Pass Manchac) only.

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

- **Women of childbearing age and children less than seven years of age should not consume more than THREE MEALS PER MONTH of Bigmouth Buffalo, Bowfin (Choupique, Grinnel), Flathead Catfish, and Yellow Bass COMBINED; OR should not consume more than TWO MEALS PER MONTH of Black Crappie (Sac-a-lait), Freshwater Drum (Gaspergou), Largemouth Bass, and Warmouth COMBINED.**
- **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: Bigmouth Buffalo, Black Crappie (Sac-a-lait), Bowfin (Choupique, Grinnel), Flathead Catfish, Freshwater Drum (Gaspergou), Largemouth Bass, Warmouth, or Yellow 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.

More information about methylmercury contamination and methylmercury advisories can be found here: ldh.la.gov/EatSafeFish.



Pete Croughan, M.D.
Interim State Health Officer and Medical Director
Department of Health



Pete Croughan, M.D.
Deputy Secretary
Department of Health



Ralph L. Abraham, M.D.
Secretary
Department of Health



Aurelia S. Giacometto
Secretary
Department of Environmental Quality



Madison D. Sheahan
Secretary
Department of Wildlife & Fisheries