

*Dec. 18, 2016*

**DSHS Issues Lake Livingston and Trinity River Fish Advisory**  
*Updates Three Additional Advisories*

The Texas Department of State Health Services today issued a fish consumption advisory for Lake Livingston and portions of the Trinity River after laboratory testing of fish samples found elevated levels of dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls or PCBs.

The Lake Livingston advisory is for seven types of fish – blue catfish, flathead catfish, freshwater drum, gar, smallmouth buffalo, striped bass and white bass. The advisory is in effect for the Trinity River Basin which includes Lake Livingston and the Trinity River from U.S. 287 downstream to U.S. 90.

Regular or long-term consumption of fish from these waters may increase the likelihood of long-term health risks. People can still fish in the area, though they should not consume or should limit their consumption of fish from this area and are advised to follow the specific age and species recommendations in this chart:

Species	Women of childbearing age & children under 12	Women past childbearing age and males 12 and older
Blue catfish	DO NOT EAT	1 meal per month
Flathead catfish	DO NOT EAT	1 meal per month
Freshwater drum	DO NOT EAT	2 meals per month
Gar (all species)	DO NOT EAT	DO NOT EAT
Smallmouth buffalo	DO NOT EAT	1 meal per month
Striped bass	1 meal per month	3 meals per month
White Bass	1 meal per month	3 meals per month

The department today also issued revised fish consumption advisories for three bodies of water due to updated evidence of the levels of contaminants in fish. The three affected bodies of water are

- The Arroyo Colorado upstream of the Port of Harlingen, including Llano Grande Lake and the Main Floodway.
- The Houston Ship Channel north of the Fred Hartman Bridge, including the San Jacinto River below the Lake Houston Dam.
- Echo Lake in Fort Worth.

Sampling shows that concentrations of pesticides in fish in the **Arroyo Colorado** (Cameron and Hidalgo counties) are no longer a health concern. However, concentrations of mercury and PCBs in some fish still exceed safe levels. For that reason, DSHS now advises no one eat longnose gar from the Arroyo Colorado. Health officials also continue to advise women of childbearing age and children under 12 not eat smallmouth buffalo and everyone else limit consumption of smallmouth buffalo to no more than two 8-ounce meals per month.

Pesticide levels have also dropped in the **Houston Ship Channel**, but concentrations of dioxins and PCBs still pose a threat to human health. Women of childbearing age and children under 12 should not eat any fish or blue crab from the Houston Ship Channel, and others should limit their consumption to one 8-ounce meal per month.

A new advisory for **Echo Lake** (Tarrant County) is based on concentrations of pesticides, dioxins and PCBs in common carp and largemouth bass that are high enough to pose a risk to human health. DSHS recommends no one eat common carp caught in Echo Lake and that women of childbearing age and children under 12 not eat largemouth bass. Everyone else should limit their consumption of largemouth bass to one 8-ounce meal per month. The consumption advisory replaces a possession ban that previously made it illegal to harvest or possess fish from Echo Lake.

Environmental pollutants like PCBs, mercury and dioxins can build up in the bodies of fish over time and lead to a variety of health consequences in people who eat contaminated fish. DSHS's Seafood and Aquatic Life Group tests fish in public bodies of water where there are concerns that pollutants may have made fish unsafe to eat. Laboratory analysis shows the concentration of contaminants and allows health experts to make recommendations on whether people should avoid or limit consumption of certain species.

A summary of the three updated recommendations follows.

Body of water	Contaminants of Concern	Species	Women of childbearing age & children under 12	Women past childbearing age and males 12 and older
Arroyo Colorado	Mercury and PCBs	Longnose gar	DO NOT EAT	DO NOT EAT
		Smallmouth buffalo	DO NOT EAT	2 meals per month
Houston Ship Channel	Dioxins and PCBs	All fish and blue crab	DO NOT EAT	1 meal per month
Echo Lake	Dieldrin, dioxins and PCBs	Common carp	DO NOT EAT	DO NOT EAT
		Largemouth bass	DO NOT EAT	1 meal per month

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