

Contaminants in Fish

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Division of Water Resources issues advisories for consumption of fish from certain Tennessee waters. These fish contain potentially hazardous contaminants.

Summary

High risk groups such as children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers should avoid consumption of contaminated fish. Because adverse health effects for normal risk groups are considered to be a result of routine and long-term exposure, an infrequent meal of listed fish is not believed to have a measurable health risk.

Health risks can be substantially reduced by taking a few precautions. Big fish tend to have higher concentrations of toxic materials than smaller ones since they are older and have had more time to accumulate them. Many toxic materials are stored in fatty tissues, so when cleaning fish remove and discard the belly flap and fatty strip along the backbone and lateral line. Filleting the fish and removing the skin is also advisable. Broiling, baking, or grilling provides additional risk reduction. These risk reduction suggestions do not reduce health risks related to mercury.

For specific information regarding aquatic contaminants or affected waters, contact your regional TWRA office or the Water Resources Division (Environment and Conservation) office at (615) 532-0625.

Current Fish Tissue Advisories (January 2016)

WATERBODY	COUNTY	PORTION	POLLUTANT	COMMENTS
Beech Reservoir	Henderson	Entirety (877 acres)	Mercury	Precautionary Advisory for largemouth bass*
Big Sandy River and Embayment	Henry, Benton, Carroll and Henderson	From embayment on mouth on Kentucky Reservoir to headwaters. (Mile 0.0 to 59.0)	Mercury	Precautionary advisory for all bass species*



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Cypress Creek	Shelby	Entirety (7.7 miles)	Chlordane & other Pesticides, PCB's	DO not eat the fish
Loosahatchie River	Shelby	Mile 0.0-17.0 (Hwy. 14, Austen Peay Highway)	Chlordane, Other Organics, Mercury	Do not eat the fish.
McKellar Lake	Shelby	Entirety (13 miles)	Chlordane, Other Organics, Mercury	Do not eat the fish
Mississippi River	Shelby	MS stateline to just downstream of Meeman-Shelby State Park (31 mi)	Chlordane, Other Organics, Mercury	Do not eat the fish. Commerical fishing prohibited by TWRA.
North Fork, Forked Deer River	Dyer Gibson	From the mouth of the Middle Ford Forked Deer River (mile 17.6) upstream to State Highway 188 (mile 23.6)	Mercury	Precautionary advisory for largemouth bass*
Nonconnah Creek	Shelby	From the Mouth to Kansas St. (Mile 0.0-1.8)	Chlordane, Other Organics	Do not eat the fish. Advisory ends at Horn Lake Road bridge.
Wolf River	Shelby	From Mouth to Germantown Road (Mile 0.0-18.9)	Chlordane, Other Organics, Mercury	Do not eat the fish.
Woods Reservoir	Franklin	Entirety (3,908 acres)	PCB's	Catfish should not be eaten
Buffalo River	Humphreys, Perry	From the mouth upstream to Hwy. 438 (Mile 31.6)	Mercury	Precautionary advisory for smallmouth bass*
Beech Creek	Wayne	From the mouth to origin (Mile 16.7) including TN River Embayment	Mercury	Do not eat the fish. Avoid contact with sediment between Leatherwood Branch & Smith Branch



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Duck River	Humphreys, Hickman	From mouth of Buffalo River (mile 15.8) upstream to I-40 (mile 31.8)	Mercury	Precautionary advisory for largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass*
Boone Reservoir	Sullivan, Washington	Entirety (4,400 acres)	PCB's, Chlordane	Precautionary advisory for carp and catfish*
Chattanooga Creek	Hamilton	Mouth to GA state line (11.9 miles)	PCBs, chlordane	Fish should not be eaten. Also, avoid contact with water.
East Fork of Poplar Creek including Poplar Creek embayment	Anderson, Roane	Mouth to New Hope Pond (Mile 0.0-15.0)	Mercury, PCB's	Fish should not be eaten. Also avoid contact with water
Emory River	Roane, Morgan	From Hwy. 27 near Harriman (mile 12.4) upstream to Camp Austin Road Bridge (Mile 21.8)	Mercury	Precautionary advisory for all fish *
Fort Loudoun Reservoir	Loudon, Blount	Entirety (14,600 acres)	PCB's (Mercury - upper portion only)	Commercial Fishing for catfish prohibited by TWRA. No catfish or largemouth bass over two pounds should be eaten. Do not eat largemouth bass from the Little River embayment. Due to mercury, precautionary advisory for any sized largemouth bass from Hwy. 129 to the confluence of Holston and French Broad Rivers (534 acres).*
French Broad River	Cocke	From Rankin Bridge (mile 71.4) to Hwy 321 near Newport (mile 77.5)	Mercury	Precautionary advisory for largemouth bass*
Hiwassee River	Meigs, McMinn, Bradley	From Highway 58 (mile 7.4) upstream to the railroad bridge just upstream of U.S. Hwy 11 (Mile 18.9)	Mercury	Precautionary advisory for largemouth bass*



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Holston River	Hawkins, Sullivan	From the mouth of Poor Valley Creek embayment (mile 89.0) upstream to the confluence of the North and South Forks of the Holston near Kingsport	Mercury	Precautionary advisory for all fish*
Melton Hill Reservoir	Knox, Anderson	Entirety (5,690 acres)	PCBs	Catfish should not be eaten.
Nickajack Reservoir	Hamilton, Marion	Entirety (10,370 acres)	PCB's	Precautionary advisory for catfish.*
Norris Reservoir	Campbell, Anderson, Union, Claiborne, Grainger	Clinch River portion. (Powell River embayment not included in advisory.) (15,213 acres)	Mercury	Precautionary advisory for largemouth bass, striped bass, smallmouth bass and sauger. *
North Fork Holston River	Sullivan, Hawkins	Mile 0.0-6.2 (VA stateline)	Mercury	Do not eat the fish. Advisory goes to TN/VA line.
Sequatchie River	Marion	From Tennessee River (mile 0.0) to State Hwy. 283 near Whitwell (mile 22.1)	Mercury	Precautionary advisory for largemouth bass*
South Holston Reservoir	Sullivan	Portion within Tennessee (7,206 acres)	Mercury	Precautionary advisory for largemouth bass.*
Tellico Reservoir	Loudon, Monroe	Entirety (16,500 acres)	PCB's, Mercury	Catfish should not be eaten
Watauga Reservoir	Carter, Johnson	Entirety (6,427 acres)	Mercury	Precautionary advisory for largemouth bass and channel catfish*
Watts Bar Reservoir	Roane, Meigs, Rhea & Loudon	TN River portion (38,000 acres)	PCBs	Catfish, striped bass, and hybrid (striped bass-white bass) should not be eaten. Precautionary advisory* for white bass, sauger, carp, smallmouth buffalo, and largemouth bass.
Watts Bar Reservoir	Roane, Anderson	Clinch River arm (1,000 acres)	PCBs	Striped bass should not be eaten. Precautionary advisory for catfish and sauger.*



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*** Precautionary Advisory - Children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers should not eat the fish species named. All other persons should limit consumption of the named species to one meal per month.**

