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The following fish consumption advisory was issued on May 21, 2021 ***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 LITTLE ALABAMA BAYOU

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 Little Alabama Bayou in Point Coupee, Iberville, and St. Martin parishes where unacceptable levels of mercury have been detected in largemouth bass, freshwater drum (gaspergou), black crappie, and bowfin (choupique, grinnel).The advisory area includes Little Alabama Bayou from its headwaters near East Krotz Springs to its confluence with Big Alabama Bayou. This is a new advisory.

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

- **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) and largemouth bass combined from the advisory area; OR should consume NO MORE THAN THREE MEALS PER MONTH of black crappie and freshwater drum (gaspergou) combined from the advisory area.**

- **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 freshwater drum, black crappie, largemouth bass, or bowfin 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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