



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 26, 2021**

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### **ARE THE FISH SAFE TO EAT IN YOUR COMMUNITY?**

**BIRMINGHAM, ALA.** – Last week, the Alabama Department of Public Health released its annual [fish consumption advisories](#), which determines the state’s recommended limits on the consumption of different species of fish found in Alabama’s waterways. Of the 223 advisories issued across waterbodies in Alabama, 16 of these advisories were listed in the Black Warrior River watershed.

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management catches and tests certain fish species in a particular region of the state annually. Then, Alabama Department of Public Health issues the fish consumption advisories to warn anglers to limit or not to consume fish that are contaminated with dangerous pollutants [like polychlorinated biphenyls \(PCBs\) and methylmercury](#). Many of the advisories warn the public not to eat any fish from the specific waterbody, while others recommend only eating one or two meals per month.

“In Alabama, the River State, fishing is an important intergenerational tradition for our families. Our goal is to ensure everyone is aware of these advisories before they drop their lines into their local waterway,” said Justinn Overton, President of Waterkeepers Alabama and the Coosa Riverkeeper. “Even though multiple state agencies are involved in the testing and analysis process, many Alabamians are still left fishing for information to learn what these advisories mean for their health. We are grateful to help families reel in this important public health information across Alabama.”

Families interested in learning more about fish consumption advisories can review the Waterkeepers Alabama interactive map online that includes the updated advisory information at [WaterkeepersAlabama.org/Fish](http://WaterkeepersAlabama.org/Fish). Not everyone has access to the internet, so the group offers a toll-free hotline for anglers to immediately hear the advisories throughout Alabama. The statewide hotline has been updated so you can hear the 2021 advisories. Anglers can simply call 1 844-219-7475 to hear the current fish consumption advisories on all the waterbodies throughout Alabama. Dial 6 to hear the advisories in the Black Warrior River watershed.

“Anglers shouldn’t have to worry about whether the fish they catch are safe to eat or not, but unfortunately they do,” said Nelson Brooke, Black Warrior Riverkeeper. “Mercury from coal emitted by Alabama Power Company’s coal-fired power plants across the state has caused unsafe levels of mercury to build up in fish tissue. Sadly, that means bass and catfish from numerous popular fishing lakes are unsafe to eat, especially from pregnant women.”

To learn more about the toxins in our fish and waterways, please visit [WaterkeepersAlabama.org/Fish](http://WaterkeepersAlabama.org/Fish).

*Additional information, including photos and interviews, available upon request*

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