

Maine Center for Disease Control Issues

Updated Advisory on Striped Bass, Bluefish Consumption

Maine One of Seven East Coast States Issuing Limits

AUUGSTA - The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention of the Department of Health and Human Services (Maine CDC), has updated its fish consumption advisory for two marine species caught in coastal and intertidal waters of Maine.

Health officials advised that striped bass and large bluefish caught in Maine waters should not be eaten by those potentially more susceptible to the toxic effects of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), including pregnant women, women of childbearing age, nursing mothers and children under the age of eight. The remainder of the general population should eat no more than four meals per year.

According to state health officials, bluefish and striped bass contain PCBs at a level of concern. PCBs can affect the endocrine system and brain development, and have been shown to cause cancer in animal studies.

“Fortunately there are many other marine and freshwater species that consumers can eat more frequently and that have health benefits,” stated Dr. Dora Anne Mills, State Health Officer and Director of Maine CDC. Commonly eaten fish marine species low in PCBs and other contaminants include Atlantic Mackerel, Cod, Haddock, Hake, Pollock, shellfish and all part of the lobster except the tomalley.

The Maine CDC’s updated advisory stems from a multi-state report finalized in 2008, which documented the PCB content of striped bass and bluefish from Maine to Georgia. The report also shows that these fish are not particularly good sources of beneficial fish oils, containing lower amounts of omega-3 fatty acids relative to the amount of PCBs they contain.

Similar advice has been issued by New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland today. These states are all instructing pregnant women and young children to not eat striped bass and large bluefish and are advising the general public to limit consumption.

All states will continue to monitor PCB levels in coastal marine species and will modify the consumption advisory as needed.

A copy of the multi-state report is available on line at:
www.maine.gov/dhhs/eohp/fish/PCBSTBhome.htm

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