

October 26, 2006

Consumption Advisory Issued for Two Species of Canyon Lake Fish

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has issued an advisory warning people to limit their consumption of striped bass and longnose gar from Canyon Lake. The advisory was issued after laboratory testing detected elevated levels of mercury in the two species.

No other species of fish from the lake are included in the warning.

The lake is in Comal County about 12 miles northwest of New Braunfels.

Adults and children 12 and older are advised to eat no more than two 8-ounce servings per month. Children under 12 should eat no more than two 4-ounce servings per month.

Pregnant women, women who could become pregnant and mothers who are breastfeeding are advised not to eat any striped bass or longnose gar from the lake.

Regular ingestion of methyl mercury, the mercury compound in the fish, can harm the human brain and nervous system. Young children are especially at risk. The brain and nervous system in a developing fetus can be permanently damaged if the mother-to-be eats foods containing elevated levels of mercury during pregnancy.

Mercury is a naturally occurring element that gets into air and water from the weathering of the earth's crust, from the burning of fossil fuels and from some industrial discharges and emissions.

Test results for largemouth bass, white bass, blue catfish and flathead catfish from Canyon Lake did not show elevated levels of mercury. Those species are not included in the consumption advisory.

There is no risk of mercury poisoning from fishing, skiing or swimming in Canyon Lake.