

# Nova Scotia Environment

## Fish consumption advisory

Please note that this advisory may be revised as new data becomes available.

### Mercury

Mercury is a naturally occurring metal in the environment. It was also used in many consumer goods and may still be found in products such as thermometers, mirrors, batteries, electrical switches and fluorescent lights.

Mercury is a concern because it can be toxic to people and other living organisms. It does not break down in the environment and it accumulates in living organisms, such as fish. When people eat these fish, they may have negative health effects.

### How much fish is safe to eat?

While there are health benefits to eating fish, there are some species in Nova Scotia that should only be eaten in smaller quantities or not at all if you are at higher risk.

Species	Fish Length < (measured nose to tail fork)	Consumption limit				
		General Public Over age 12	Women who are or may become pregnant and / or are breast feeding	Children age 5-11	Children age 1-4	Infants (less than 1 year of age)
<b>Rainbow Trout</b>	Any Size	No Advisory	No Advisory	No Advisory	No Advisory	No Advisory
<b>Brook Trout</b>	Under 25 cm (9.8 in)	2 servings per week	1 serving per week	1½ servings per month	¾ serving per month	½ serving per month
<b>Brook Trout</b>	Over 25 cm (9.8 in)	1 serving	1 serving per month	Avoid	Avoid	Avoid

		per week				
<b>Yellow Perch</b>	Under 20 cm (7.9 in)	1 serving per week	2 servings per month	½ serving per month	Avoid	Avoid
<b>Yellow Perch</b>	Over 20 cm (7.9 in)	1 serving per month	Avoid	Avoid	Avoid	Avoid
<b>White Perch</b>	Under 25 cm (9.8 in)	2 servings per month	1 serving per month	Avoid	Avoid	Avoid
<b>White Perch</b>	Over 25 cm (9.8 in)	1 serving per month	½ serving per month	Avoid	Avoid	Avoid
<b>Chain Pickerel</b>	Under 35 cm (13.8 in)	2 servings per week	1 serving per week	1½ servings per month	1 serving per month	½ serving per month
<b>Chain Pickerel</b>	Over 35 cm (13.8 in)	2 servings per month	1 serving per month	Avoid	Avoid	Avoid
<b>Smallmouth Bass</b>	Under 35 cm (13.8 in)	3 servings per month	1 serving per month	1½ servings per month	Avoid	Avoid
<b>Smallmouth Bass</b>	Over 35 cm (13.8 in)	2 servings per month	Avoid	Avoid	Avoid	Avoid

<b>Other freshwater species</b>	Any Size	1 serving per week	Avoid	Avoid	Avoid	Avoid
1 serving = 75g or 2½oz or 125mL or ½cup of cooked fish (Canada’s Food Guide)						

**Why are there limits on some fish but not others?**

Fish that feed on other fish tend to occupy a higher position in the food chain so they have higher mercury levels in their muscle tissue. For example, in Nova Scotia, smallmouth bass and chain pickerel feed on smaller, younger fish. Therefore, species like these may have higher mercury levels.

If there is no fish consumption advisory, it means that either the fish species has not been tested for mercury levels, or it is below human health guidelines for mercury levels. Health Canada provides [more information about mercury in fish](#).

**POLYCHLORINATED BIPHENYLS (PCBS)**

Scientific research suggests that over a number of years, eating a steady diet of contaminated fish may be harmful to human health. Trout caught in two lakes in Nova Scotia showed levels of PCBs that are above the acceptable guidelines established by Health Canada.

As a precaution, we advise the public not to eat fish taken from Five Island and Sheldrake Lakes.

Catch and release regulations are in place on Five Island, Sheldrake, and other lakes in this area (see Recreational Fishing Area 3 in the [Nova Scotia Anglers’ Handbook](#)).



If you have any questions regarding this advisory please contact the Nova Scotia Department of Environment at 1-800-565-3611.

Please pass this information on for to your band members. Thank you,

Jemie

**Jemie Lent**

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