

## **MDPH advises that NO ONE should eat the following from the Housatonic River Area**

- **Fish, frogs, and turtles from the Housatonic River and tributaries that feed into the main river from Center Pond Dam in Dalton to the Connecticut border**
- **Mallards and wood ducks from the Housatonic River and its impoundments from Pittsfield south to Rising Pond in Great Barrington**

## **Information about the Housatonic River Area**

The Housatonic River Area is made up of eight communities in Berkshire County: Lanesborough, Dalton, Pittsfield, Lenox, Stockbridge, Lee, Great Barrington, and Sheffield. There are three main branches of the Housatonic River, the East Branch, West Branch, and Southwest Branch that combine to make up the main stem of the Housatonic River which flows south from Pittsfield into Connecticut.

Due to releases of chemicals by the General Electric Company from the early 1930s through the late 1970s, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are present in soils, sediment, fish, and certain waterfowl in and around the Housatonic River area.

While some portions of the Housatonic River area have been cleaned-up, PCBs may be present in some fish and waterfowl at levels that could be harmful if eaten.

## **Fish and waterfowl in the Housatonic River and tributaries may be exposed to PCBs**

- PCBs are a group of man made organic chemicals banned in the 1970s.
- PCBs can still be found in our environment and can get into our food due to their widespread use.
- PCBs can enter fish's bodies and concentrate in their skin fat, internal organs and sometimes muscles.
- Larger species feed on smaller species. This causes the larger, older fish to concentrate the most chemicals (a process known as biomagnification).
- PCBs can also collect in the tissue of waterfowl.



## **Effects of PCBs on health**

- In studies of workers, PCBs are suspected of causing liver problems, skin lesions or irritations, and some types of cancer.
- In non-workplace settings, children are most affected by PCBs during fetal development, nursing, and early growth.
- Exposure to small amounts of these chemicals can interfere with brain development even before birth (affecting how well children learn, think, behave and develop later in life).

## **Tips for recreational fishing in the Housatonic River and its tributaries**

- Observe posted warning signs and follow their advice.
- Practice "Catch and Release" when fishing in the Housatonic River and in tributaries that feed into the main river.
- Follow the State-wide Fish Consumption Advisory for other lakes, rivers, and ponds in the Housatonic River area in Massachusetts (see back). More specific consumption advice is available for certain bodies of water that have been tested at [www.mass.gov/dph/fishadvisories](http://www.mass.gov/dph/fishadvisories).
- For information on stocked fish, please contact the MassWildlife Western District office, Dalton. Tel: (413) 684-1646 or visit <http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/>.

## **Tips for preparing fish caught from feeder streams to the Housatonic River**

- Trim fatty tissue prior to cooking.
- Broil instead of fry.
- Allow as much fat as possible to be drained away.

## **Fish is good for you! Continue to eat a variety of fish from other sources because fish is low in saturated fat, high in protein, and helps to prevent heart disease.**

**For more information on how to choose fish and waterfowl that are safe to eat please contact the MDPH Bureau of Environmental Health at 617-624-5757 or 800-240-4266.**

[http://www.mass.gov/dph/environmental\\_health](http://www.mass.gov/dph/environmental_health)

## General State-wide Advice for Eating Recreationally Caught Fish and Waterfowl In Massachusetts

### Safe Guidelines for Eating Fish

**Guidelines for pregnant women, women who may become pregnant, nursing mothers and children under 12 years old:**

**Do Not Eat:** Freshwater fish caught in streams, rivers, lakes, and ponds in Massachusetts\*

**Safe To Eat:** Fish that are stocked in streams, rivers, lakes, and ponds in Massachusetts

**Safe To Eat:** Cod, haddock, flounder and pollock in larger amounts

**Do Not Eat:** Lobster from New Bedford Harbor

**Do Not Eat:** Swordfish, shark, king mackerel, tilefish, and tuna steak

**Do Not Eat:** Bluefish caught off the Massachusetts coast

**Do Not Eat:** Lobsters, flounder, soft-shell clams and bivalves from Boston Harbor

**Guidelines for everyone:**

**Do Not Eat:** Fish and shellfish from the closed areas of New Bedford Harbor

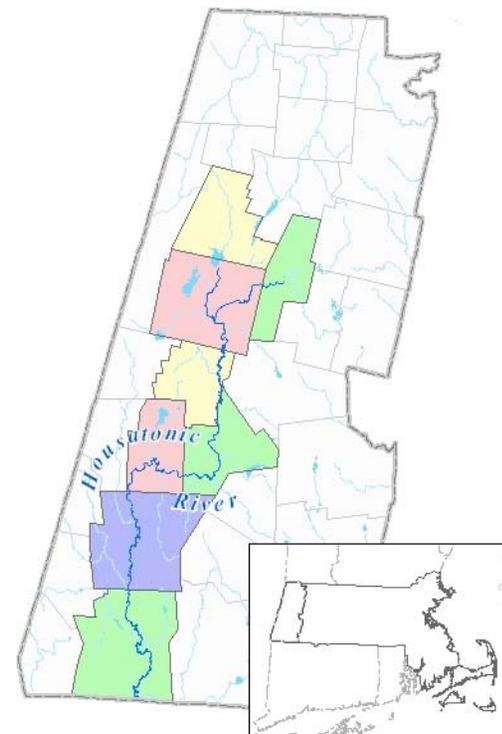
**Do Not Eat:** Lobster tomalley

\*More specific consumption advice is available for certain freshwater bodies that have been tested at: <http://www.mass.gov/dph/fishadvisories> or by calling 617-624-5757.

### Safe Guidelines for Eating Wild Waterfowl

- Skin and remove all fat before cooking
- Discard stuffing after cooking
- Drippings should not be used for gravy
- Eat waterfowl in moderation (no more than 2 meals per month)

## Fish and Waterfowl Consumption Advice for the Housatonic River Area in Massachusetts



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