

# FISH CONTAMINATION

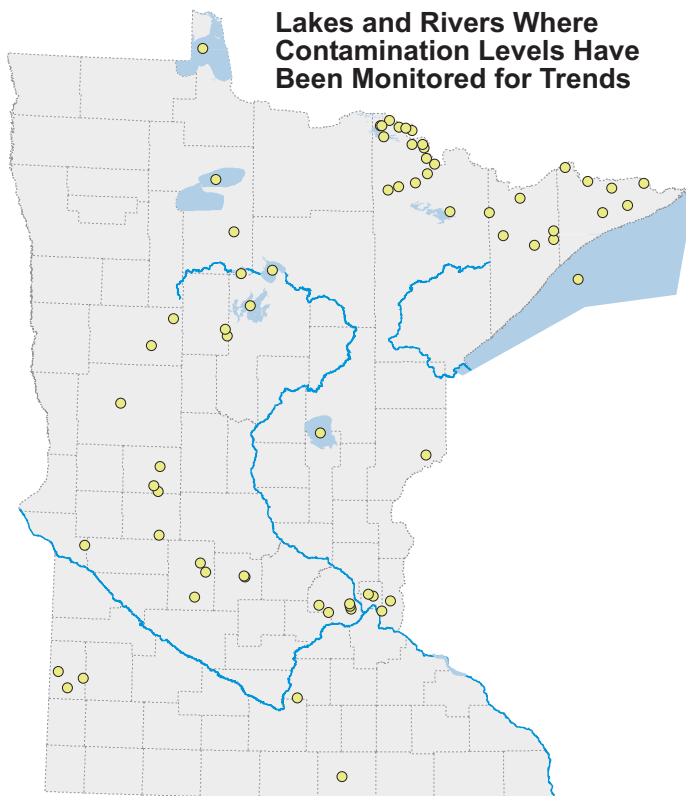
**INDICATOR:** Fish contaminant levels in important fishing waters

## WHY IS THIS INDICATOR IMPORTANT?

Many outdoor recreationists enjoy fishing and eating the fish they catch. Unfortunately, much of the fishery is contaminated with chemicals, primarily mercury. This has resulted in the issuance of numerous consumption advisories. Fish contaminant data provide the basis for these advisories. They also provide some measure of the threat to other fish-consuming species, including mink, otter, and loons. In addition, the measurement of mercury levels in fish provides an important indicator of progress in attempts to decrease the release of additional mercury into the environment.

## WHAT IS DNR DOING?

Since 1990, DNR has managed the Minnesota Fish Contaminant Monitoring Program (FCMP), and has collaborated closely with other agencies to identify appropriate monitoring goals and to gather and disseminate fish contaminant data. As of 2009, more than 1,080 lakes (out of 6,000 fishable lakes) and more than 100 river reaches had been sampled, including all the state's 11 large lakes, six major rivers, and certain more highly contaminated waters. The FCMP has a plan for resampling the state's 11 large lakes and six major rivers approximately every five years. DNR also is resampling selected mercury trend lakes for Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (PCA) studies on a cycle of two to five years.



Minnesota waters monitored for trends in fish contaminant levels. DNR works with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Minnesota departments of Health and Agriculture to monitor important fishing waters, analyze trends, and report on fish consumption advisories to Minnesota citizens.

**TARGETS:** Resample major lakes and rivers for fish contamination on an approximate five-year cycle; work with PCA for mercury trend lake resampling on a two-to five-year cycle; collect and test additional samples to support the Clean Water Legacy Initiative. DNR received new funding in 2006 through the Clean Water Legacy Act for expanded testing of mercury in fish from other water bodies throughout the state. With this funding up to 80 additional water bodies are tested annually, resulting in data that can be used for determining consumption advisories, impairment status, and trend markers for those sites.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT:

- Minnesota's Fish Contaminant Monitoring Program at: [www.pca-state.mn.us/publications/p-p2s4-05.pdf](http://www.pca-state.mn.us/publications/p-p2s4-05.pdf)
- Minnesota lakes at: [www.mndnr.gov/lakes/index.html](http://www.mndnr.gov/lakes/index.html)
- Lake water quality at: [www.pca.state.mn.us/water/lake.html](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/lake.html)
- Fish consumption advisories at: [www.mndnr.gov/lakefind/fca/index.html](http://www.mndnr.gov/lakefind/fca/index.html)