



TOWN OF WAYLAND

Board of Health

41 COCHITUATE ROAD
WAYLAND, MASSACHUSETTS 01778

Julia Junghanns, R.S., C.H.O.
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH
TEL. (508) 358-3617
www.wayland.ma.us

BOARD OF HEALTH
Robert DeFrancesco, DMD
John Schuler, MD
Arnold Soslow, MD
Genevieve Anand, MD
Robert Eyre, MD

Press release – March 28, 2023

The Massachusetts Department of Health issues new fish consumption advisory for Lake Cochituate and other water bodies in Massachusetts

On March 6, 2023 the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) issued new fish consumption advisories to provide guidance for people who catch and consume freshwater fish from 13 waterbodies at state parks operated by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Recent testing of fish by DPH from these locations found levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) above DPH-recommended levels for regular consumption.

Lake Cochituate-North Pond/Wayland areas

Fish were collected and tested from the Upper and Middle Ponds of Lake Cochituate which includes areas of Wayland/North Pond. Results show that levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are above DPH-recommended levels for fish consumption. The new advisory includes all sections of Lake Cochituate: Middle, North, South, and Carling Basins. This is based on the understanding that fish can travel freely between the three smaller sections of the lake.

A previous Lake Cochituate advisory included PCB's and has now been replaced by an advisory that includes both PCB's and PFAS. The new advisory states; FOR sensitive populations (including children under 12, people of childbearing age who are or may become pregnant, and nursing people) do not eat any fish, FOR the general population do not eat American eel, limit all other fish to 1 meal/2 months.

The town of Wayland will post updated advisory signage in public access areas. The public is encouraged to check the state's website before visiting other towns for fishing to see if there is an advisory, see other impacted water bodies below and links to the town and state website.

Other results from the testing of recreational waterbodies, showed elevated levels of PFAS were detected in fish sampled from:

- Ashland Reservoir in Ashland
- Chicopee Reservoir in Chicopee
- Lake Cochituate in Natick
- Dennison Lake in Winchendon
- Dunn Pond in Gardner
- Fearing Pond in Plymouth
- Houghtons Pond in Milton

- Pearce Lake in Saugus
- Pequot Pond in Westfield
- Lake Quinsigamond in Worcester
- Walden Pond in Concord
- Wallum Lake in Douglas
- Watsons Pond in Taunton

DPH also sampled surface water at these locations, and PFAS was not found at levels that would be unsafe for swimming or any other recreational activities at these locations.

PFAS are a group of man-made chemicals manufactured and used in a variety of consumer products and industries worldwide. Based on studies of laboratory animals and people, exposure to certain PFAS has been associated with changes in liver and kidney function, changes in thyroid hormone and cholesterol levels, and immune system effects. In addition, PFAS exposure has been shown to cause developmental effects to fetuses during pregnancy. Some studies also suggest an increased risk of developing cancer following long-term exposures to elevated levels of some PFAS.

DPH prioritized the testing of fish and surface water at these waterbodies because they are popular locations for swimming and fishing. They are also located in communities in or near [Environmental Justice Populations](#), where the existing burden of disease and exposure to sources of pollution are greatest. Surface water testing at seven marine beaches, including Carson, Constitution, Savin Hill, and Tenean beaches in Boston Harbor; Revere Beach in Broad Sound; Kings Beach in Nahant Bay; and Wollaston Beach in Quincy Bay showed that these beaches are safe for swimming.

The [fish consumption advisories](#) for the 13 waterbodies include guidance on the amount of fish that can be safely consumed from each individual location. This varies depending on the levels of PFAS found in the fish, other contaminants that have been evaluated in the past, and who might consume the fish. Advisories were developed for sensitive populations (including children under 12, people who are or may become pregnant, and nursing people) and for all others in the general population.

Because the new fish consumption advisories are different for each waterbody, recommendations range from consuming two meals per week to no fish consumption. DPH fish consumption advice applies to the consumption of all native game fish, but do not apply to stocked trout at a waterbody. Stocked fish are raised in fish hatcheries and then released. Therefore, they are unlikely to spend enough time in a lake or pond to become contaminated.

DPH has recommended that DCR work with local health departments in Ashland, Chicopee, Concord, Douglas, Gardner, Milton, Natick, Plymouth, Saugus, Taunton, Westfield, Winchendon, and Worcester to help publicize this information for people in these communities that may visit the local state parks. For more information about the fish consumption advisories and PFAS from DPH, please visit: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/pfas-per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-in-recreationally-caught-fish>

<https://www.mass.gov/news/department-of-public-health-issues-new-fish-consumption-advisories-based-on-pfas-in-fish-at-13-state-parks>

<https://www.wayland.ma.us/health-department/pages/public-health-information> Fish Consumption Advisories