



INNOCENT ANGLERS AND CONSUMERS NEED THE FACTS ON POISONED FISH WITHIN NSW

RFA WARNS OF INCREASED RISK OF MERCURY POISONING OF UNSUSPECTING FISH CONSUMERS IN NSW.

On top of the elevated dioxin levels in fish in NSW waters, mercury is making its presence felt in NSW and around the world.

While present Commonwealth regulations prevent commercial fishers from keeping either the blue or black marlin in NSW, the Striped Marlin have become an unfortunate target off the East Coast in recent years. During the early days of March 2006, the Striped Marlin has been under increased pressure on the North and South Coast of NSW. The commercial longlining fleet, which supposedly targets tuna, has been landing a worrying amount of Striped Marlin as supposed 'by-catch'. Figures range from 500-2000 fish as by-catch. If that's not bad enough, the use of live bait by these operators have seen the local bait stocks decimated by commercial lift nets and purse seiners. These marlin steaks are destined for the NSW seafood market, either labeled as marlin or swordfish steaks and are dangerously high in mercury.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has released updated advice on mercury in fish. The revised advice has been extended to provide not just advice for pregnant women, and women considering pregnancy, but also for young children and the general population.

ONLY 1 serve (150 grams) per fortnight of Shark (Flake) or Billfish (Broadbill and Marlin) and no other fish that fortnight.

In the adult brain, toxic effects of methylmercury, at high levels of exposure, causes a loss of cells in specific areas, most commonly the cerebellum, visual cortex, and other focal areas of the brain. The first effect observed is typically paraesthesia (numbness and tingling in lips, fingers and toes), which frequently appears some months after the exposure first occurred. In severe cases, there is progression to loss of coordination, narrowing of the visual fields, hearing loss and speech impairment.

In the foetal brain, methylmercury at high levels causes more extensive and generalised damage by disrupting normal patterns of cell migration and neuronal cell division. The effects in the infant of such damage are similar to those of cerebral palsy.

Two separate maximum levels are imposed for fish — a level of 1.0 mg mercury/kg for the fish that are known to contain high levels of mercury (such as swordfish, southern bluefin tuna, barramundi, ling, orange roughy, rays and shark) and a level of 0.5 mg/kg for all other species of fish. A limit of 0.5 mg/kg is also imposed for crustaceans and molluscs. These limits apply to all seafood offered for commercial sale.

The Recreational fishing Alliance of NSW will be asking the NSW Minister of Primary Industries for the test results of the current batch of by-catch destined for our tables in NSW. Discussion are also occurring to have the striped marlin declared a recreational species only and to have the

Recreation Fishing Alliance of NSW

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NSW Minister of Primary act to stop the decimation of the baitfish stocks by state and commonwealth longliners in NSW waters.

RFA WARNS OF MORE FISH SPECIES IN SYDNEY HARBOUR INFECTED WITH DIOXINS

The NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Ian Macdonald claimed that the current preliminary test of fish in Sydney Harbour was "great news for recreational fishermen" even though more species such as squid, sand whiting and trevally exhibited high levels of dioxins

The Minister called for the initial tests after tests revealed "bottom dwellers exposed to the poisons in the sediment" such as bream and prawns had very high levels of dioxins. The current preliminary results has so far indicated that pelagic fish such as kingfish have very low levels but the Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW is concerned that new species such as Trevally and Squid have returned dangerous levels of Dioxins. These new species are not what the Minister calls "bottom dwellers". The tests have also focused on pelagic species like kingfish, that were guaranteed to return 'favorable' results and have largely ignored the apex predator in the system, the mulloway. Results of these tests are still a while away from being completed, with only approximately 26 of the 60 mulloway needed for the samples being caught.

The current clean up of the poisoned sites in the Harbour and Parramatta River will not go far enough. The NSW Government is only cleaning up the foreshore in areas such as Drummoyne, Rhodes and Homebush Bay. The bottom of these areas needs to be cleaned up, and places like Homebush Bay and the areas west of Silverwater should be dredged or sediments would spread, as is currently the case in the way the Rivercat Ferries traverse and disturb the sediments. The tidal flow does the rest.

A 2002 Environmental Impact Statement on the remediation of Homebush Bay shows extremely high levels of dioxin beyond the area of the proposed clean-up which will pose a continuing threat to Drummoyne, Homebush and Rhodes residents and the states 440,000 fee paying anglers.

The 'bottom dwellers' like bream and prawns will continue to feed on the poisoned sediment if not removed completely. Focusing on the foreshore and nearby land would not see these bans lifted for a very long time. Anglers are forced to limit their consumption of fish from the Harbour even after paying \$30 a year for the privilege of putting a few fresh fish on the families' dinner table.

The Recreational fishing Alliance of NSW will be asking the NSW Minister of Primary Industries to act on the behalf of all anglers and fish consumers within NSW to ensure the toxic slurry is cleaned from Sydney Harbour and further testing is conducted in Botany Bay, Lake Macquarie and Lake Illawarra.

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