



Department  
of Health

# NYS DOH Hudson River Fish Sign Pilot

June 25, 2025



# About the NYS DOH Fish Advisory Program

- NYS DOH has been issuing advice on eating fish you catch for 50 years
- NYS DOH works closely with NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Fish and Wildlife (NYS DEC)
  - NYS DEC annually collects and analyzes contaminants in about 1,500 fish from more than 50 locations/waters.
  - NYS DOH issues advice and works with regional NYSDEC staff on both tech and outreach issues
  - NYS DOH and DEC work closely with EPA on many contaminated sites





# How NYS DOH Sets Advisories

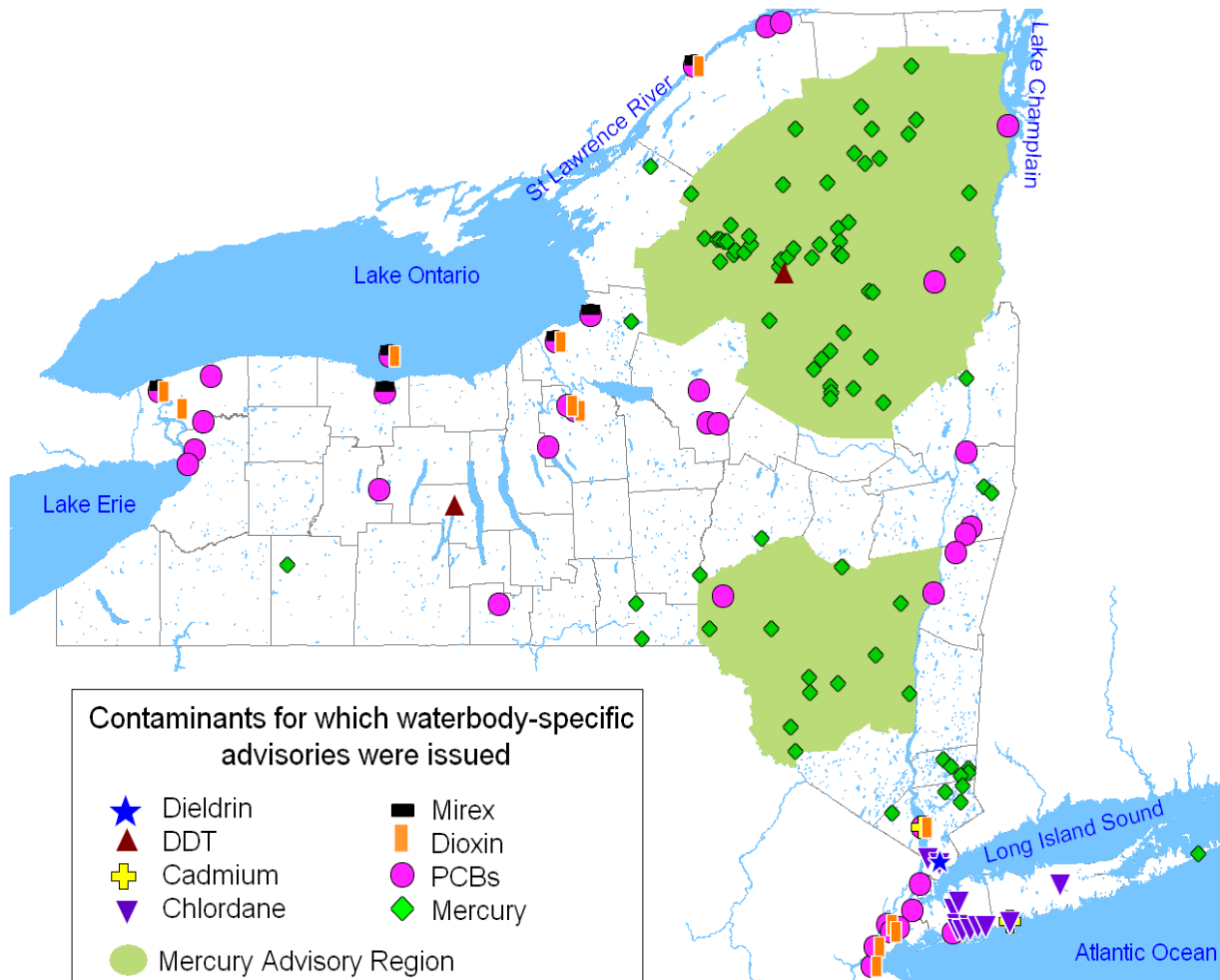
- Advisories are issued based on a risk management approach
- Contaminant guidelines are considered in addition to:
  - Quality and quantity of the data
  - Species of fish (some fish are more likely to accumulate chemicals)
  - Trends over time
  - Considerations for sensitive populations
  - Balancing the benefits of eating fish vs. the risk of exposure

More information can be found here:

[www.health.ny.gov/fish/background.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/fish/background.htm)



# NYS DOH Fish Consumption Advisories



- There is fish specific regional advice for every freshwater in NYS
- About 140 waters have specific advice
- Advice helps reduce exposures to environmental chemicals while balancing the benefits of eating fish
- Updated guidelines have been issued for PFOS, PCBs, and mercury in recent years
- The advice depends upon where you fish, who you are, and what you catch

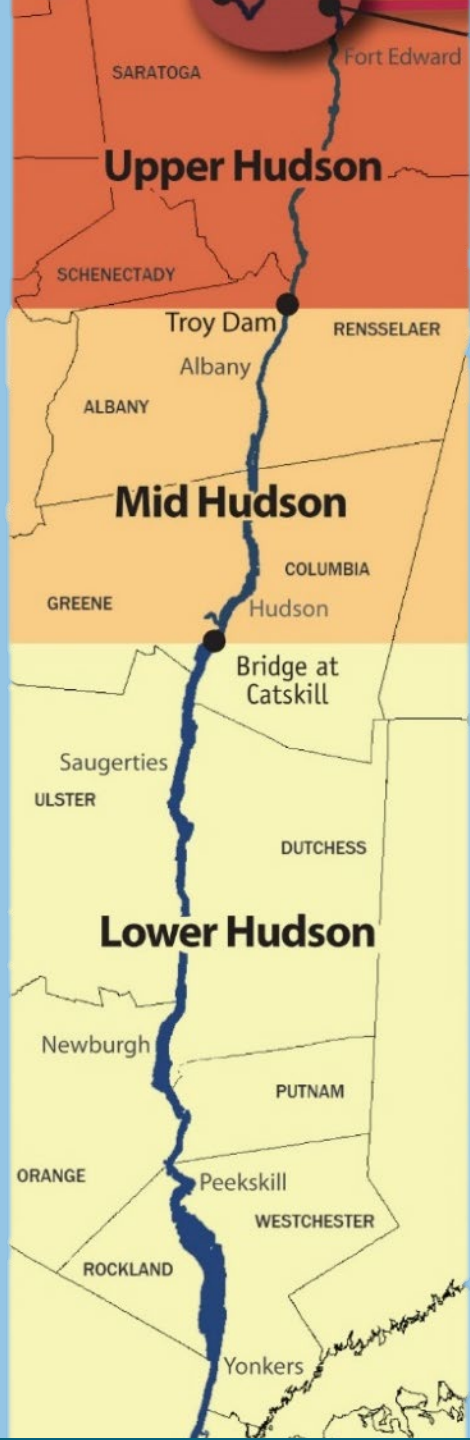


# The Concern about PCBs in Fish



PCBs build up in fat, so fish can have thousands of times the levels of PCBs in the water

- Generally, food is the primary source of PCB exposure for the public, contaminated fish can contain high levels of PCBs
- Some populations are more at risk because they eat more fish – recreational anglers, ethnic and low-income communities
- Half life in the body depends upon congener(s) – can be up to 20 years (months to decades)



# Hudson River Fish Advisory Outreach Project

- The Hudson River Superfund site and project area is 200 miles long
- Three different advisory zones between Hudson Falls and The Battery in NYC
- The outreach project is a 20-year grant funded effort through 2027 - fish advisories will continue to be needed for decades

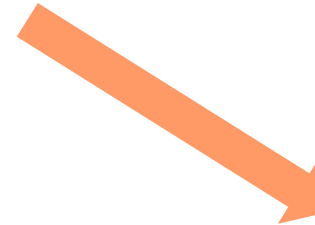
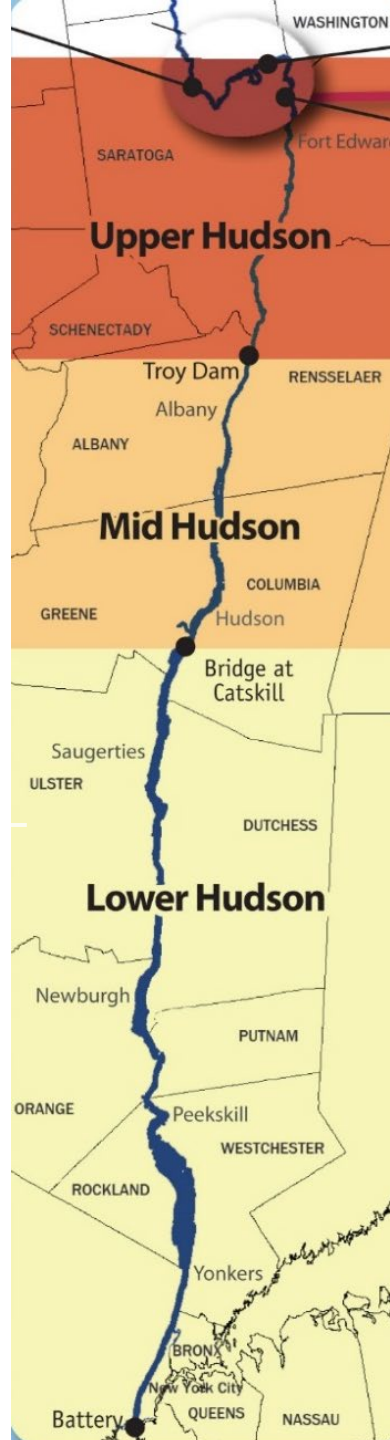


# Hudson River Advice for General Population:

## Hudson Falls to Troy

## Troy to Catskill

\*Sensitive population should  
not eat any fish from the  
Hudson River



### Upper Hudson

From the Rt. 9 Bridge to Troy Dam

Do not eat fish from the Route 9 Bridge to the Troy Dam.

From Baker's Falls to the Troy Dam, New York's State Department of Environmental Conservation's "catch and release" regulations apply.

**Take No Fish. Eat No Fish.**

### Mid Hudson

From Troy Dam to Bridge at Catskill

Eat up to one meal a month:



Alewife



Rock bass



Blueback herring






















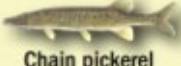
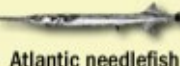
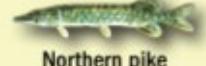








Yellow perch

**Do not eat other fish from the  
Mid Hudson including striped bass**

# Hudson River Advice

## Catskill to NYC

Lower Hudson From Rip Van Winkle Bridge at Catskill to the NYC Battery			 General Population	 Sensitive Population
 Brown trout  Rainbow trout  Yellow perch			4 meals/month	0 DON'T EAT
 Bluegill  Pumpkinseed/Sunfish  Black crappie				
 White sucker  Rock bass  any fish not listed				
 Striped bass  Smallmouth bass  Largemouth bass			1 meal/month	0 DON'T EAT
 Bluefish  Brown bullhead  White perch				
 Goldfish  Carp  Freshwater drum  Rainbow smelt				
 Chain pickerel  Atlantic needlefish  Northern pike				
 Blue crab Do not eat the tomalley ("green stuff," mustard, hepatopancreas) or reuse cooking water			6 crabs/week	0 DON'T EAT
 Walleye  White catfish  Channel catfish			0 DON'T EAT	0 DON'T EAT
 American eel*  Gizzard shad				
*DEC regulations prohibit taking American eel for food from the Hudson River				





# Reaching the Fishing Public

- DOH staff attend events in all Hudson River counties from Washington County to NYC, overlapping with partners and covering as needed
- Advice is available on NYS DOH website and free literature is available in a variety of languages –distributed by municipalities, parks, libraries, bait shops, food pantries, etc.
- Work with fishing organizations, programs for low-income families, food banks, and other groups
- Table at community festivals, county fairs, fishing and hunting shows, ethnic festivals, etc.

 **NYSDOH - New York State Health Department**   
Sponsored · 

Our new Statewide Advice for eating fish you catch ranks the fish from "Best Choice" to "Don't Eat." Find your fish.



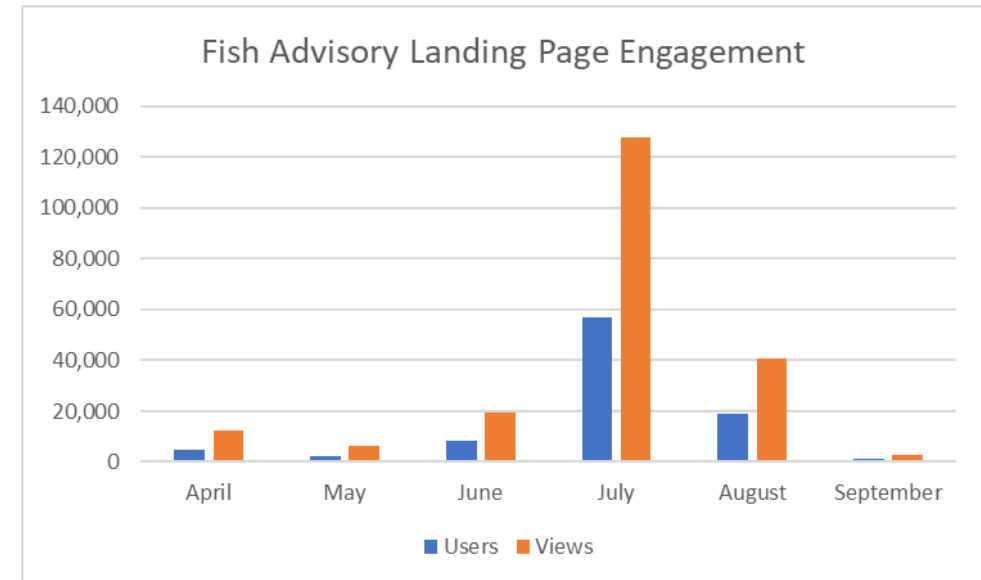
 **Department of Health**

[ny.gov/fish](https://ny.gov/fish)  
**Make Good Choices** [Learn more](#)

 Like  Comment  Share

# Paid Social Media Helps Get the Word Out

- Word of mouth is very important for angler communities
- Paid social media ads help to reach people and their families who are interested in fishing, and takes them directly to our website
- People who see the ads can comment, tag their friends, and share the post as an additional way to increase reach





# Funding Our Partners

- HRFA has been funding a variety of community partners since 2009 to better reach communities
- The program has provided \$1.29 million dollars to community partners to raise awareness

## Current funded partners:

- Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Albany County
- CCE Rockland County
- CCE Saratoga County
- CCE Dutchess County (+ Orange, Ulster, & Columbia/Greene as subcontractors)
- Hudson Sloop Clearwater
- Westchester Co Parks & Recreation





# Partner Activities

Each partner has a slightly different focus based on the needs of their communities

Activities include:

- Tabling at events
- Presentations in community venues like libraries and fish & game clubs
- Classes at schools
- English-as-a-new-language classes
- Shoreline walks and recording consumption surveys
- Promoting advice via radio, newspapers, and social media
- Outreach at food pantries and WIC/Nutrition clinics



NYS DOH Hudson River Fish Advisory Outreach



# Hudson River Signs

# Hudson River Signs

- DOH considers signage one part of a multi-pronged approach to raising awareness
- Hudson River has a robust sign program – managing over 120 sites along 300 miles of shoreline
  - DEC and EPA currently maintain signage above Federal Dam in Troy
- Keeping signs posted is challenging for a variety of reasons
- For DOH, posting signs is voluntary on the part of property owners





A map of the Hudson River area, showing various fishing access sites. The sites are marked with colored circles: red, blue, yellow, and brown. Some circles contain a white checkmark, indicating a good status, while others contain a white 'X', indicating a need for maintenance or removal. The map includes major roads like I-84 and I-9W, and locations like Balmville, Beacon, and Hudson Highlands State Park. A large white circle highlights a section of the river with many red and blue markers.

# Maintaining a Sign Program

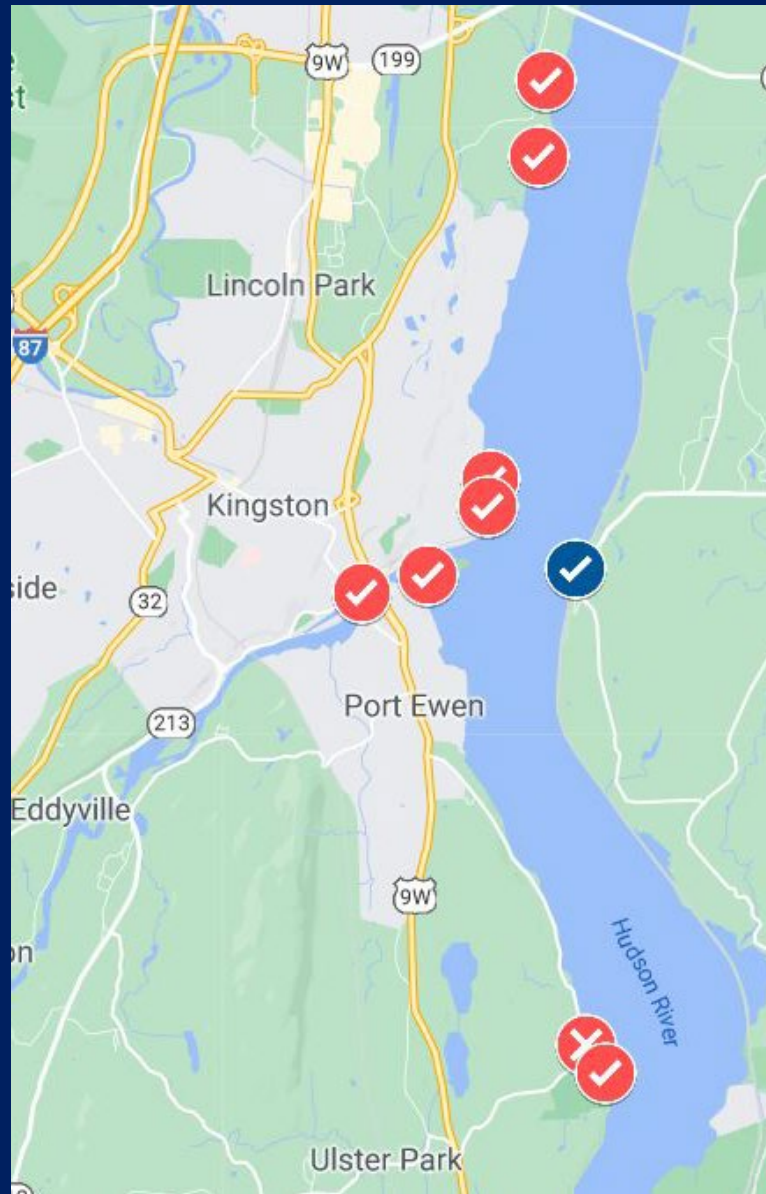
- Signs require maintenance – are frequently damaged or removed
- Staff do annual/semi-annual inspections of signage at fishing access sites south of the Federal Dam in Troy
- Over 500 signs have been mailed
- Sites primarily include state and municipal public access points (parks, boat launches) – no CSX, no trespassing
- If signs are needed, we determine property owner and follow up by letter and phone calls



# Google Map of Sign Locations

- Public interface to our database
- Check mark means signs are posted
- “X” means no signs
- Clickable and shows some details about correspondence

To view sign google mapper:  
[health.ny.gov/hudsonriverfish](http://health.ny.gov/hudsonriverfish)



NYS DOH Hudson River Fish Advisory Outreach



← Hudson River Fish Advisory ... ×

TR GALLO WATERFRONT PARK - KINGSTON

2019 - 1 Spanish warning, 1 English warning, 1 Spanish notice.  
Missing 1 English notice

2017- 1 English, 1 Spanish warning posted on pier, mailed 2 more signs

2014- mailed 3 English 3 Spanish

2013- no signs

# 2025 Hudson River Sign Pilot

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- We acknowledging perceptions about signage are complicated
- We have launched a three-pronged approach to testing new, draft signs
- New designs are based on past angler engagement, and are being tested with the public and municipalities
- These signs represent varying level of info, fish pictures, and actual advice
  - The more advice is on a sign, the more complicated it becomes to manage them as the advice changes

## **WARNING!**

Fish and crabs from these waters contain chemicals and may be harmful to eat, especially for women and children.



### **Learn more!**

Call NYS Department of Health  
518-402-7800  
800-458-1158

## **NOTICE!**

Some fish and crabs from these waters may be harmful to eat.




### **Learn more!**

Call NYS Department of Health  
518-402-7800  
800-458-1158

Original signs

# Municipality Feedback

- Survey Monkey (online survey) feedback on four potential sign designs + follow-ups
- Slider style ranked choice voting
- Why do they prefer a specific design?
- What are the main barriers/challenges to posting?
- If there was an agreed upon location, could DOH post signs themselves?
- Goal: learn more about preferences for posting (increase posting compliance)




## Can You Eat that Fish from the Hudson?

Hudson River fish contain chemicals called PCBs that may be harmful to your health.


The health advice on eating fish depends on:

- who you are
- what you catch
- where you fish


Learn more about which fish to eat and how to reduce chemicals:




New York State Department of Health  
[health.ny.gov/hudsonriverfish](http://health.ny.gov/hudsonriverfish)  
518-402-7530




Español




中文



Kreyòl Ayisyen



Русский



Polski

Test Sign #1



# Public Feedback

- Online survey similar to the Municipality survey
- We ask, “what category best represents you”?
  - Hudson River angler
  - Angler elsewhere
  - Concerned citizen
  - NGO/Environmental advocate
  - Municipality/Town Representative
  - Other
- Space to comment on each sign design and detail what folks like and don’t like
- Partnering with local Hudson orgs to increase reach

## **FISH** **ADVISORY** Can You Eat that Fish from the Hudson?

Fish and crabs from these waters contain PCBs and may be harmful to eat, especially for babies and children.



Striped bass



Bluefish



Channel catfish



Blue crab



Yellow perch



Largemouth bass



Freshwater drum

Scan the QR code below or visit the website to learn more about which species are ok to eat and how to reduce chemicals.

**Find the  
Advice:**



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Test Sign #2

# On River Feedback

- Based on existing feedback, select two designs
- Pilot locations selected based on popularity of the park, and also proximity of partners/staff that can monitor if signs are being vandalized/taken down

- Northern location (tbd)
- Long Dock Park (partnering with Scenic Hudson)
- Croton Point Park (partnering with Westchester Co)

- Test engagement – which signs attract the most attention (measured in scans of QR codes/phone calls)

## HUDSON RIVER FISH ADVISORY

Mid-Hudson From the Federal Dam in Troy to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge in Catskill				General Population	Sensitive Population
				1 meal/month	0 DON'T EAT
All other fish, including: 					
				0 DON'T EAT	0 DON'T EAT

\*DEC regulations prohibit taking American eel for food from the Hudson River. Learn more about PCB levels in Hudson River striped bass at [health.ny.gov/fish/stripedbass.htm](http://health.ny.gov/fish/stripedbass.htm)

The sensitive population refers to people who can become pregnant (under age 50) and children under 15. The general population refers to everyone else.

New York State Department of Health  
[health.ny.gov/hudsonriverfish](http://health.ny.gov/hudsonriverfish)  
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## HUDSON RIVER FISH ADVISORY

Lower Hudson From Rip Van Winkle Bridge at Catskill to the NYC Battery					General Population	Sensitive Population
					4 meals/month	0 DON'T EAT
					1 meal/month	0 DON'T EAT
Do not eat the tomalley ("green stuff"), mustard, hepatopancreas or reuse cooking water.					6 crabs/week	0 DON'T EAT
					0 DON'T EAT	0 DON'T EAT

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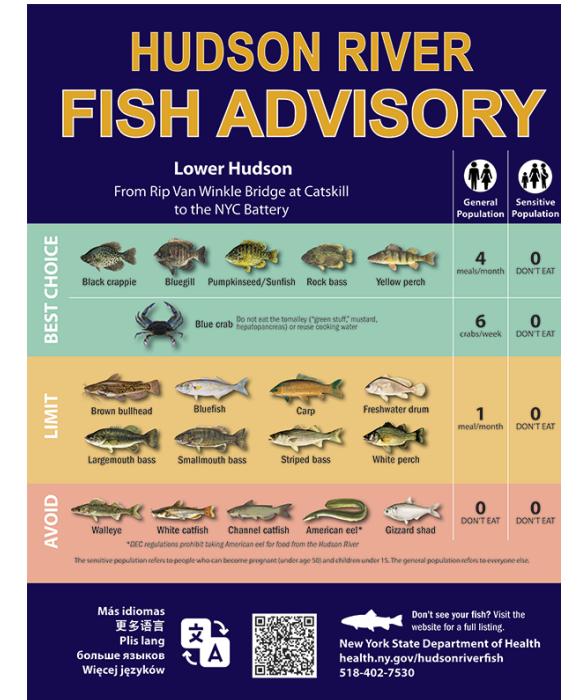
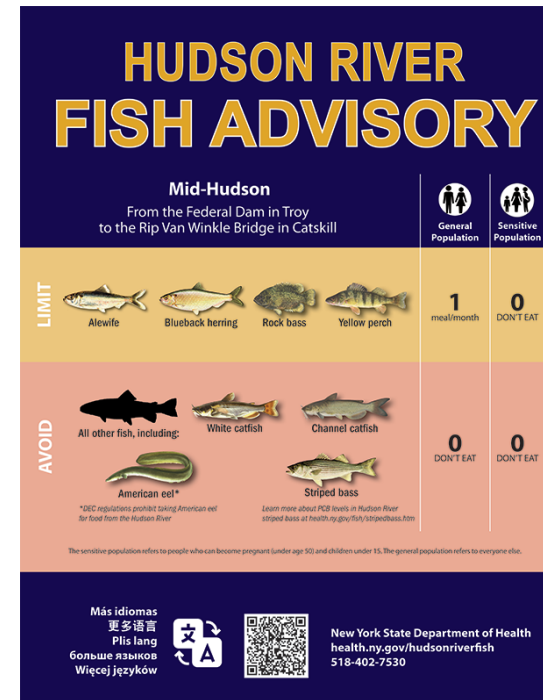
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Pair of Test Signs #3

# Final Decisions

- Municipality survey will close ~mid-July
- Public survey will close ~ end of July
- Test signs will stay up through mid-October
- Staff are involved in a U.S.-wide literature review of how other states handle signage as part of the Great Lakes Consortium
- Opinions of different interest groups and age groups will be reviewed within the public survey
- Outreach to ENL groups will be used to determine language QR code usability
- Final design elements will be decided upon
- New signs will start rolling out summer of 2026



Pair of Test Signs #4




# Takeaways

- Health advisories are one tool to help people make better choices about eating locally caught fish
- Health advisories are advice, not a regulation
- DOH strives to improve communication to anglers of all backgrounds
- Our community partners are the biggest strength of this program – they know their communities best
- Signs can be an effective tool to raise awareness at the point of action, BUT
  - Must be concise and action oriented
  - They are only effective if they are seen
  - They are only effective if they are posted
  - They require maintenance, checks, and partner support

# Tell Us What You Think



[surveymonkey.com/r/HudsonSignSurvey](https://surveymonkey.com/r/HudsonSignSurvey)



## Can You Eat that Fish from the Hudson?

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- who you are
- what you catch
- where you fish


Learn more about which fish to eat and how to reduce chemicals:




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## HUDSON RIVER FISH ADVISORY


Mid-Hudson From the Federal Dam in Troy to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge in Catskill				General Population	Sensitive Population
				1 meal/month	0 DON'T EAT
All other fish, including:    				0 DON'T EAT	0 DON'T EAT

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## HUDSON RIVER FISH ADVISORY


Lower Hudson From Rip Van Winkle Bridge at Catskill to the NYC Battery				General Population	Sensitive Population
				4 meals/month	0 DON'T EAT
				1 meal/month	0 DON'T EAT
				6 cods/week	0 DON'T EAT
Blue crab <small>Do not eat the tomalley ("green stuff") mustards, hepatopancreas or roach cooking water.</small>				0 DON'T EAT	0 DON'T EAT
				0 DON'T EAT	0 DON'T EAT

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## FISH ADVISORY

### Can You Eat that Fish from the Hudson?

Fish and crabs from these waters contain PCBs and may be harmful to eat, especially for babies and children.

Striped bass

Bluefish

Channel catfish

Yellow perch

Blue crab

Largemouth bass

Freshwater drum

Scan the QR code below or visit the website to learn more about which species are ok to eat and how to reduce chemicals.



Find the Advice:



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## HUDSON RIVER FISH ADVISORY

	Mid-Hudson From the Federal Dam in Troy to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge in Catskill				General Population	Sensitive Population
LIMIT					1 meal/month	0 DON'T EAT
AVOID	All other fish, including:    				0 DON'T EAT	0 DON'T EAT

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Más idiomas  
更多语言  
Pis lang  
Gosnue itzayków  
Więcej języków



New York State Department of Health  
[health.ny.gov/hudsonriverfish](https://health.ny.gov/hudsonriverfish)  
518-402-7530

## HUDSON RIVER FISH ADVISORY

	Lower Hudson From Rip Van Winkle Bridge at Catskill to the NYC Battery				General Population	Sensitive Population
BEST CHOICE					4 meals/month	0 DON'T EAT
	Blue crab <small>Do not eat the tomalley ("green stuff") mustards, hepatopancreas or roach cooking water.</small>				6 cods/week	0 DON'T EAT
LIMIT					1 meal/month	0 DON'T EAT
AVOID					0 DON'T EAT	0 DON'T EAT

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518-402-7530



# Questions?

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NYS Fish Advisory Outreach  
Manager

[audrey.vangenechten@health.ny.gov](mailto:audrey.vangenechten@health.ny.gov)

518-402-7537

For more information about  
NYS Fish Advisories:

[www.health.ny.gov/fish](http://www.health.ny.gov/fish)







# Current Multi-Language Approaches



“Sign Totem”


### Can You Eat that Fish from the Hudson?

People who can get pregnant and children under 15 should not eat any fish or crabs from the Hudson River.



















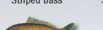
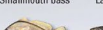
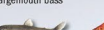

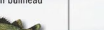
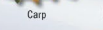
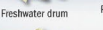
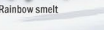




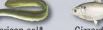
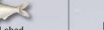
### ¿Puede comer pescados del río Hudson?

Las personas que pueden quedar embarazadas (menores de 50 años) y las personas menores de 15 no deberían comer ningún tipo de pescado o cangrejos del río Hudson.




#### Lower Hudson

From Rip Van Winkle Bridge at Catskill to the NYC Battery  
Desde el puente Rip Van Winkle en Catskill hasta NYC Battery

	 General Population Población general	 Sensitive Population Población vulnerable
 Brown trout  Rainbow trout  Bluegill  Black crappie  Pumpkinseed/Sunfish	<b>4</b> meals/month comidas por mes	<b>0</b> DON'T EAT NO COMER
 Yellow perch  White sucker  Rock bass  any fish not listed		
 Striped bass  Smallmouth bass  Largemouth bass  Bluefish  Brown bullhead	<b>1</b> meal/month comida por mes	<b>0</b> DON'T EAT NO COMER
 Carp  Freshwater drum  Rainbow smelt  Goldfish  White perch		
 Chain pickerel  Atlantic needlefish  Northern pike		
 Blue crab Do not eat the tomalley ("green stuff," mustard, hepatopancreas) or reuse cooking water NO COMER el hígado (la sustancia verde, mostaza) ni use el líquido de la cocción	<b>6</b> crabs/week cangrejos por semana	<b>0</b> DON'T EAT NO COMER
 Walleye  White catfish  Channel catfish  American eel*  Gizzard shad	<b>0</b> DON'T EAT NO COMER	<b>0</b> DON'T EAT NO COMER

The Sensitive Population refers to people who can become pregnant (under age 50) and children under 15. The General Population refers to everyone else.

La población vulnerable hace referencia a las personas que pueden quedar embarazadas menores de 50 años de edad o las personas menores de 15 años de edad. La población general hace referencia a cualquier otra persona.



518-402-7530  
HRFA@health.ny.gov

6/24

