



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

DIRECTOR'S ORDER NO. 190

Subject: Fish Advisories in National Wildlife Refuges, Wetland Management Districts, and National Fish Hatcheries

Sec. 1 What is the purpose of this Order? This Order directs managers of Service-owned properties that allow recreational fishing to take actions to apprise anglers of:

- a. Fish advisories in effect for their waters, and
- b. The risks to human health associated with eating specific fish caught in those waters.

Sec. 2 What is the scope of this Order? This Order applies to managers of Service-owned properties that allow recreational fishing. Service-owned properties include National Wildlife Refuges, Wetland Management Districts, and National Fish Hatcheries.

Sec. 3 What is the legal authority for this Order?

- a. National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. Sec. 668dd-ee), as amended.
- b. Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. Sec. 742(f)(a)), as amended.

Sec. 4 What are fish advisories?

a. Fish advisories inform people about the risks from consuming fish caught in specific lakes, rivers, and coastal waters. Many advisories are statewide or cover extensive reaches of coastline. Advisories may indicate that people should restrict their consumption of fish, or they may advise that fish from certain waters are safe to eat.

b. States issue advisories for specific waters in their jurisdictions. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issues national advisories.

Sec. 5 Why do we need a Director's Order about Fish Consumption Advisories?

The EPA's National Listing of Fish Advisories contains more than 3,000 State-originated advisories in effect in 48 states. Some of these cover waters found on Service-owned properties. In 2004, the EPA and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued joint, nationwide advice regarding mercury and fish. The Service wants



to ensure that all recreational anglers catching fish on Service-owned properties are aware of applicable advisories.

Sec. 6 What actions are managers of National Wildlife Refuges, Wetland Management Districts, and National Fish Hatcheries required to take? Service managers who have recreational fishing on their stations must take the following actions, as appropriate:

a. Identify State fish advisories in effect for waters on their stations, including multiple advisories for adjoining States. The States maintain the most current and accurate list of advisories. Where State lists are not readily available, managers may find the advisories in EPA's National Listing of Fish Advisories online.

b. Read and familiarize themselves with the EPA/FDA joint mercury advisory of 2004. It covers all U.S. waters not under a State advisory, and is available on EPA's Fish Advisories Website. The advisory recommends that pregnant women or those who might become pregnant, nursing mothers, and small children should not eat more than 6 ounces of sport-caught fish per week, regardless of the waters where the fish was caught. Local State advisories may be more or less restrictive than the national advisory.

c. Strive to effectively communicate fish advisories in effect for their waters to all anglers, including those who do not speak or have limited ability to speak English. Managers should always emphasize that advisories relate to fish *consumption*, and that recreational fishing is still a wholesome activity. Examples of possible actions managers may take include:

(1) Post or make available State outreach materials, such as leaflets and signs, at visitor contact points and at access points to fishing areas.

(2) Post or make available EPA outreach materials on fish advisories and fish consumption at visitor contact points and at access points to fishing areas. The EPA brochure, "Should I Eat the Fish I Catch?" is available in English, Spanish, Hmong, Korean, and Vietnamese, through EPA's Website. You can request the brochure from EPA's national distribution center by calling 1-800-490-9198. The brochure is free.

(3) Incorporate language about fish advisories into new or updated fishing brochures or materials referencing station fishing programs. Distribute appropriate State outreach materials, as well as the EPA leaflet "Should I Eat the Fish I Catch?" with fishing brochures.

(4) Incorporate information about fish advisories into environmental education and interpretive activities.

(5) Work with respective State and/or tribal entities to explore and develop additional outreach efforts as appropriate.

d. As necessary, work with their State's fish and wildlife management agency and health department to clarify information relevant to the waters for which the manager is responsible. This is especially important where there are uncertainties about applicable State advisories or where a State does not recognize an EPA advisory.

e. Some stations sample for aquatic contaminants in connection with both fishing and non-fishing related activities. Where such data suggest a new advisory, or change to an existing advisory, the station should work with both the State health department and fish and wildlife management agency to pursue appropriate action.

f. For technical assistance on contaminant issues, contact the environmental contaminants specialist in the Ecological Services (ES) Office that provides contaminant support to your hatchery, refuge, or wetland management district. You can find a directory of environmental contaminants program personnel on the Division of Environmental Quality's Intranet site.

Sec. 7 When is this Order effective? This Order is effective immediately and remains in effect for 18 months, or until converted in this or modified form to the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual.



DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Date: April 26, 2007