

Catch the Latest Advice

health.ny.gov/fish

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Catskill Region

Health Advice on Eating Fish You Catch

Advice on eating fish you catch from Delaware, Greene, Sullivan, and
Ulster counties and parts of Schoharie County

Why We Have Advice

Fishing is fun, and fish are an important part of a healthy diet. Fish contain high-quality protein, essential nutrients, healthy fish oils, and are low in saturated fat. However, some fish contain chemicals at levels that may be harmful to health. This brochure is for people who may eat the fish they catch from waters of the Catskill Region.

Where You Fish



The Catskills are rich with rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds, and offer wonderful opportunities for fishing. However, some fish from the Catskill Region can have high levels of mercury. By following the Catskill Regional Advice and specific advisories for Catskill waters, families can maximize the health benefits of eating locally caught fish while minimizing exposure to mercury.

See the Regional Advice on page 5 and the tables on pages 8-9 for additional specific advisories that apply to Catskill Region waters.

Who You Are



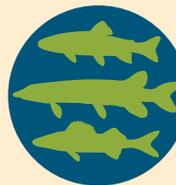
People who can bear children (under 50) and children under 15 (the sensitive population) are advised to limit the kinds of fish they eat and how often they eat them.

People who eat highly contaminated fish and become pregnant may have an increased risk of having children who are slower to develop and learn.

Chemicals may have a greater effect on the development of young children or unborn babies. Also, some chemicals may be passed on in mother's milk.

People beyond their childbearing years and those who do not bear children (the general population) may face fewer health risks from some chemicals. For that reason, the advice for the general population allows them to eat more kinds of sportfish and more often.

What You Catch



There is specific advice about limiting or not eating certain kinds of fish in some of this region's waterbodies (see specific advice tables). In the Catskill Region, some fish like walleye and smallmouth bass have higher levels of mercury than others. In general, smaller fish are less contaminated than larger, older fish of the same species. Use the Catskill Regional Advice (p. 5) to choose from the best/good choice species to reduce exposure to mercury.



Chemicals in the Catskill Region

The primary chemical of concern in the Catskill Region is mercury. Mercury occurs naturally, but it is also released into our environment from sources like coal combustion. Testing of fish in the Adirondack and Catskill Regions and in some NYS reservoirs has shown certain species of fish have higher levels of mercury than in other parts of the state.

Health Risks

Fish can have chemical levels thousands of times more than the surrounding water. These chemicals build up in your body over time. Methylmercury, the form of mercury that builds up in fish, can cause effects on the nervous system. Exposure to methylmercury is more of a concern for children and unborn babies because their nervous systems are still developing. Some research on people who eat large amounts of fish finds that methylmercury might affect children's memory, attention, and language development. To find out more about effects of mercury on adults, visit:

www.health.ny.gov/environmental/chemicals/mercury/docs/exposure_levels.htm

Tips to Avoid Mercury

- The main way to reduce how much mercury you get from fish is to avoid certain species or eat smaller fish within a species.
- To reduce exposures to mercury, avoid or eat less largemouth and smallmouth bass, northern pike, pickerel, walleye, and larger yellow perch (for example, longer than 10 inches) because these fish tend to have higher mercury levels.
- Mercury is distributed throughout a fish's muscle tissue (the part you eat), rather than in the fat and skin. Cooking, trimming and skinning, and soaking will not reduce the amount of mercury in a fish meal.

Catskill Regional Advisory

NYS DOH has issued regional advice for **all waters** within the Catskill Region because the fish have been more affected by methylmercury. Everyone should follow the advice on the right (p. 5) when fishing from waters **without** specific advisories in the Catskill Region (specific advisories are listed in the tables on pages 8-9). Choose from the “best choice” and “good choice” categories for the whole family because these fish have lower levels of mercury.

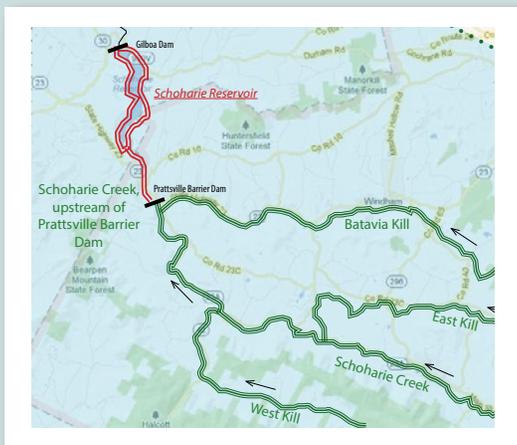
Example waters where the Catskill Regional Advisory applies:

- Rondout Reservoir
- Rondout Creek
- Lower East Branch Delaware River (downstream of the Pepacton Reservoir Dam)
- Lower West Branch Delaware River (downstream of the Cannonsville Reservoir Dam)
- Blenheim-Gilboa Upper and Lower Reservoirs
- Beaver Kill
- Lower Esopus Creek

Detailed County Maps

Detailed maps are available that show the health advice for public access waters in many counties. These maps are part of a statewide series that will become available over time: www.health.ny.gov/fish/maps.htm.

These maps use color coding to highlight waters with our general, regional, and specific advisories and show how the advisories apply to tributaries. These maps are a quick, visual guide that can help people make better choices about where to fish for food locally.

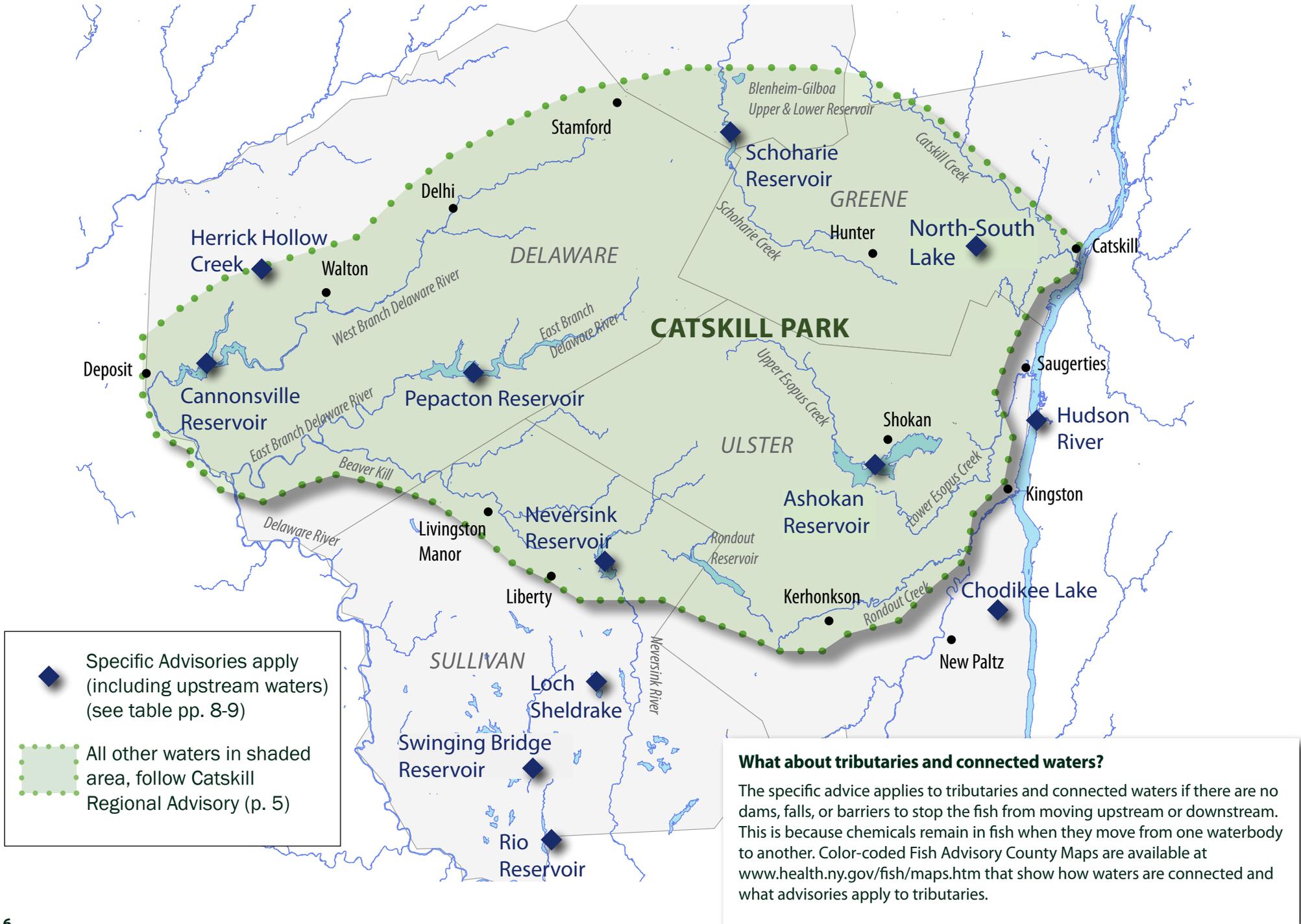


Greene County map example showing color-coded specific and regional advisories.

 General Population	 Catskill Regional Fish Advisory	 Sensitive Population
4 meals a month	<div style="border: 2px solid blue; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> *Best Choice Fish* </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Brook trout </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Rainbow trout </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Bluegill </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Pumpkinseed/Sunfish </div> </div>	4 meals a month
4 meals a month	<div style="text-align: center;"> Good Choice </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Black crappie </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Brown trout </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Bullhead </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Carp </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Chain pickerel less than 20" </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Lake trout </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  White sucker </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Yellow perch less than 10" </div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> And all other fish </div> </div>	1 meal a month
1 meal a month	<div style="text-align: center;"> Eat Less </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Chain pickerel greater than 20" </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Largemouth bass </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Rock bass </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  White perch </div> </div>	1 meal a month
1 meal a month	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Smallmouth bass </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Walleye less than 19" </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Yellow perch greater than 10" </div> </div>	0 DON'T EAT
0 DON'T EAT	<div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">  Walleye greater than 19" </div>	0 DON'T EAT

The sensitive population refers to people who may bear children under the age of 50 and children under 15. The general population refers to everyone else.

Waterbody-Specific Advisories for the Catskill Region



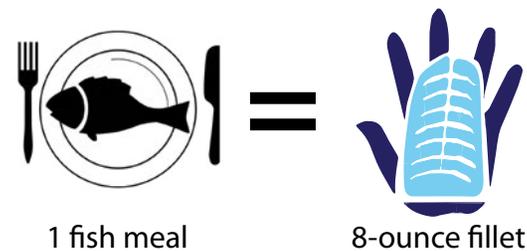
Waters with specific advisories:

 Locations & Tributaries	 Fish	 General Population	 Sensitive Population
All other Catskill Region waters NOT listed Follow Catskill Regional Advisory (p. 5)			
Ashokan Reservoir	Largemouth bass	Up to 1 meal/month	Greater than 15", DON'T EAT; Less than 15", Up to 1 meal/month
	All other fish	Follow Catskill Regional Advisory	
Cannonsville Reservoir	Yellow perch	Up to 1 meal/month	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Follow Catskill Regional Advisory	
Chodikey Lake	Largemouth bass	Greater than 15", up to 1 meal/month; Less than 15", up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
Herrick Hollow Creek	Brook trout	Up to 1 meal/month	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Follow Catskill Regional Advisory	
Hudson River, <i>Federal Dam at Troy to Rip Van Winkle Bridge at Catskill</i>	Alewife, Blueback herring, Rock bass, and Yellow perch	Up to 1 meal/month	DON'T EAT
	All other fish (including Striped bass and Walleye)	DON'T EAT	DON'T EAT
Hudson River, <i>Rip Van Winkle Bridge at Catskill to NYC Battery</i>	Crab or lobster tomalley (hepatopancreas, mustard) and cooking liquid	DON'T EAT	DON'T EAT
	Channel catfish, Gizzard shad, Walleye, White catfish	DON'T EAT	DON'T EAT
	Blue crab meat	Up to 4 meals/month (six crabs per meal)	DON'T EAT
	Atlantic needlefish, Bluefish, Brown bullhead, Carp, Goldfish, Largemouth bass, Rainbow smelt, Smallmouth bass, Striped bass, White perch	Up to 1 meal/month	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT

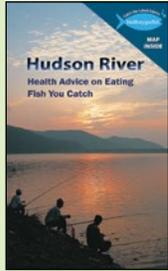
Specific advice continued:

 Locations & Tributaries	 Fish	 General Population	 Sensitive Population
Loch Sheldrake	Walleye	Up to 1 meal/month	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
Neversink Reservoir	Brown trout	Up to 1 meal/month	Up to 1 meal/month
	All other fish	Follow Catskill Regional Advisory	
North-South Lake	Largemouth bass	Up to 1 meal/month	Greater than 15", DON'T EAT; Less than 15", up to 1 meal/month
	All other fish	Follow Catskill Regional Advisory	
Pepacton Reservoir	Brown trout	Up to 1 meal/month	Up to 1 meal/month
	All other fish	Follow Catskill Regional Advisory	
Rio Reservoir	Smallmouth bass	Greater than 15", up to 1 meal/month; Less than 15", up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
Schoharie Reservoir	Yellow perch, Black crappie	Up to 1 meal/month	Up to 1 meal/month
	All other fish	Follow Catskill Regional Advisory	
Swinging Bridge Reservoir	Walleye	Up to 1 meal/month	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT

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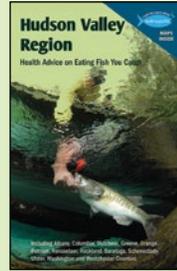


Other Free Publications Available:



Hudson River Advice

Advice from Hudson Falls to New York City Battery



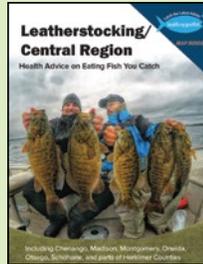
Hudson Valley Advice

Advice for Albany, Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Rensselaer, Rockland, Saratoga, Schenectady, Ulster, Washington, and Westchester counties



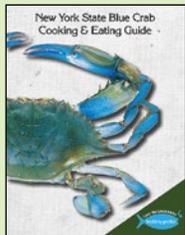
Adirondack Region Advice

Advice for Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer, Lewis, Saratoga, St. Lawrence, Warren, and Washington counties



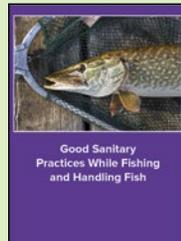
Leatherstocking/Central Region Advice

Advice for Chenango, Madison, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, and Schoharie counties, and parts of Herkimer county



New York State Blue Crab Cooking and Eating Guide

Blue crab advice for the Hudson River, New York City and Long Island



Good Sanitary Practices While Fishing and Handling Fish

Information about fishing and cooking fish caught in waters with microorganism concerns

View and order publications online: www.health.ny.gov/fish/publications.htm

COMMON FISH OF THE CATSKILLS



Bluegill



Brook trout



Brown trout



Bullhead



Chain pickerel



Crappie



Lake trout



Largemouth bass



Northern pike



Rainbow trout



Rock bass



Smallmouth bass



Sunfish/
Pumpkinseed



Walleye



Yellow perch

Fish from Stores and Restaurants



The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates the sale of commercial fish in markets. Due to concerns about mercury, the FDA and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) advise pregnant people, people who may become pregnant, nursing mothers, and young children to avoid eating shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tuna (bigeye), marlin, orange roughy, and tilefish.

Visit www.fda.gov/fishadvice or www.epa.gov/fishadvice for more information.

More Information

New York State Fish Advisories

Department of Health
www.health.ny.gov/fish
(518) 402-7800
(800) 458-1158
BTSA@health.ny.gov

Fishing in NYC Reservoirs

NYC Department of Environmental Protection (NYC DEP)
<https://www.nyc.gov/site/dep/recreation/fishing.page>
1-800-575-LAND (5263)
recreation@dep.nyc.gov

New York State Fishing

Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)
www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/fishing.html

DEC Region 3

(Sullivan and Ulster counties)
New Paltz Office
(845) 256-3161
fwfish3@dec.ny.gov

DEC Region 4

(Delaware, Greene, and Schoharie counties)
Stamford Sub-Office
(607) 652-7366
fwfish4@dec.ny.gov

If you are not sure about possible fish barriers near waters where you are fishing, call your DEC office listed on the back of this brochure. If you have questions about fish advisories for your favorite waterbody call the fish advisory team at (518) 402-7800. Visit www.health.ny.gov/fish for the latest advice about eating your catch for all regions in the state.

Inside photo of trout courtesy of Brian Walencik (@trouttornado).