

September 21, 2009

DSHS Issues Fish Advisory for Village Creek

The Texas Department of State Health Services has issued an advisory warning people to limit their consumption of crappie, gar and largemouth bass from Village Creek in Hardin County near Beaumont.

The advisory was issued after laboratory testing showed elevated levels of mercury in fish samples from the three species taken from the creek. Other fish species such as blue catfish, channel catfish, freshwater drum and spotted bass were sampled and are not included in the advisory.

Adults should limit consumption of the three fish species from Village Creek to no more than two 8-ounce servings per month. Children under 12 years old should limit consumption to no more than two 4-ounce servings per month. Women who are nursing, pregnant or who may become pregnant should not consume the three fish species from Village Creek.

Regular ingestion of methylmercury, the mercury compound in the fish, can harm the human brain and nervous system. Young children are especially at risk. The brain and nervous system in a developing fetus can be permanently damaged if the mother-to-be eats foods containing elevated levels of mercury during pregnancy.

Mercury is a naturally occurring element that gets into air and water from the weathering of the earth's crust, from the burning of fossil fuels and from some industrial discharges and emissions.

Elevated levels of mercury in fish do not pose a health risk for people swimming, fishing or participating in other water recreation activities in Village Creek.

Village Creek, which runs through Big Thicket National Preserve, is a popular canoeing spot about 15 miles north of Beaumont.