



# News Release

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(22-051)

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## **DOH issues health advisory for sturgeon in lower Columbia River**

*Agency recommends limiting meals of sturgeon due to levels of PCBs*

**OLYMPIA** – The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) is issuing a health advisory for consumption of sturgeon from the lower Columbia River, which extends from the mouth of Columbia (A) upriver to the Bonneville Dam (B).<sup>1</sup> The advisory, in accordance with findings from the [Oregon Health Authority](#), recommends limiting consumption of sturgeon based on contaminant levels of [polychlorinated biphenyls](#) (PCBs) in the fish tissue. Advisories and consumption limits are recommended when contaminants are above Washington state's health-based screening values.

A meal of sturgeon is proportionate to the size of the palm of the hand. Meal limit recommendations for sturgeon from the lower Columbia River are:

- No more than 7 meals per month for pregnant women, nursing mothers, and children
- No more than 8 meals per month for all other adults

[PCBs](#) can exist in sediment where sturgeon feed. Sturgeon can live long lives and their meat is high in fat in regions where PCBs accumulate over time. Consuming large amounts of fish contaminated with PCBs can cause negative health effects over time and can lead to potential learning and behavioral problems. Mothers can pass PCBs to children during pregnancy and when nursing. Babies and young children are the most vulnerable to negative health effects from these contaminants.

While it is important to know the risks of consuming fish with high levels of contaminants, discontinuation of consumption of all fish is not recommended. A diet with a variety of fish

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<sup>1</sup> See Washington state map of lower Columbia River.

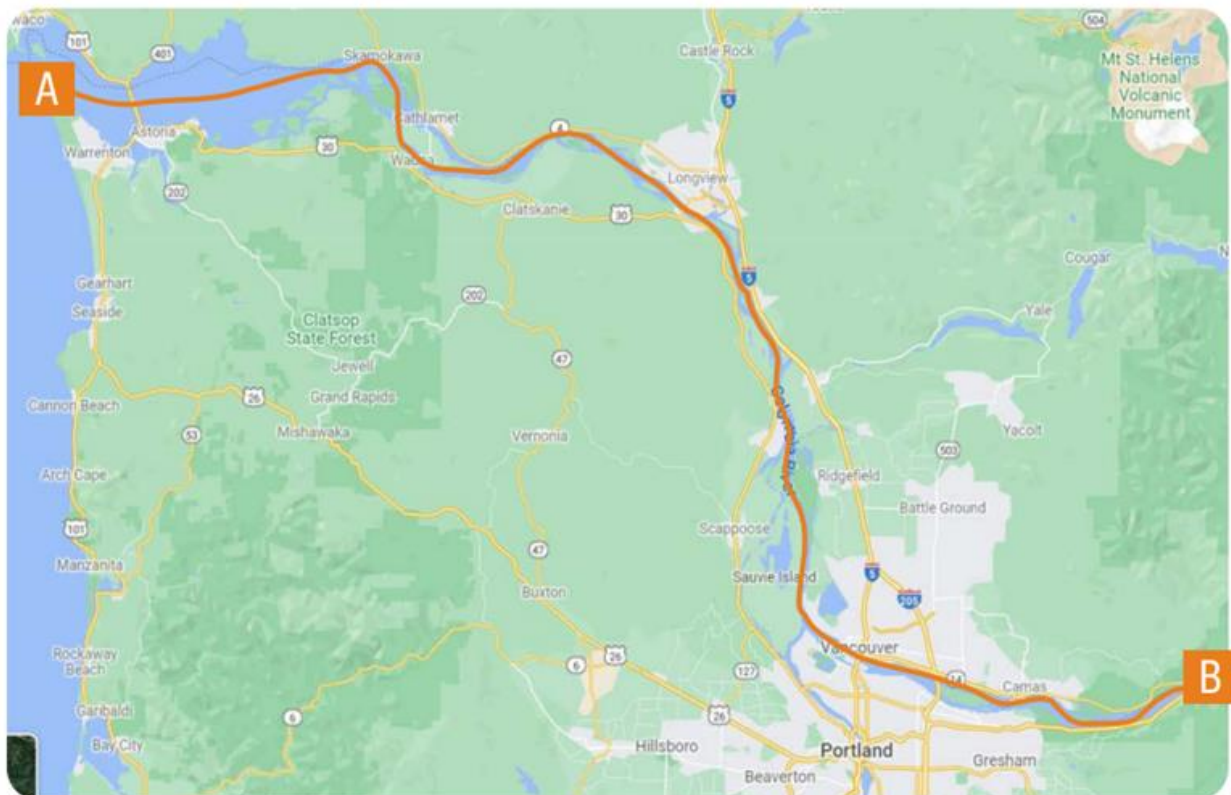
## Sturgeon Advisory

April 7, 2022

Page 2

sources has [health benefits](#). Fish are high in protein, low in fat, and rich in nutrients like omega-3 fatty acids - which provide heart disease protection and hold neurological benefits. Fishing and fish consumption can have social and cultural benefits to an individual's overall wellbeing.

DOH will continue to evaluate and update the sturgeon advisory as future data becomes available. Fishers can visit the [WA DOH fish advisories webpage](#) for information on the Columbia and other Washington state rivers.



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