



Restrictions on Fish Consumption Edition

# St. Marys River Area of Concern NEWSLETTER

## *Restrictions on Fish and Wildlife Consumption*

Due to historical discharges of pollutants from local industry and municipalities the St. Marys River is one of 43 Area of Concern (AOC) within the Great Lakes Basin. There are 14 Beneficial Use Impairments (BUI) used to determine the health of the AOC. Currently 6 of these BUIs remain for the Canadian side of the St. Marys River. The *Restrictions of Fish and Wildlife Consumption* BUI has been split into two sub-categories for easier assessment. While the Restrictions on Wildlife Consumption has always been listed as *Not Impaired*, Restrictions on Fish Consumption has been considered *Impaired* since its designation in the Stage 1 Remedial Action Plan (RAP) Report in 1992. This report stated that in both Ontario and Michigan, mercury and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contamination had resulted in elevated fish consumption advisories for a variety of local fish within the St. Marys River. The Stage 2 RAP Report had indicated that industrial and municipal discharges were contributing significant loadings of these contaminants to the St. Marys River.



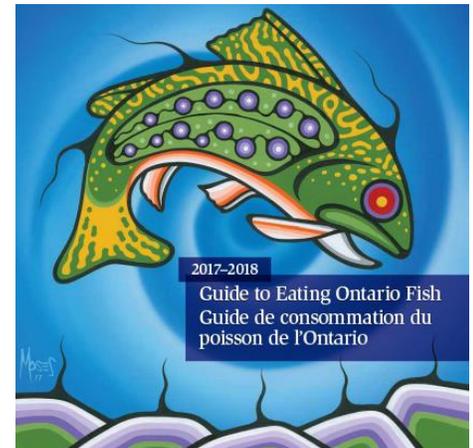
### ***Delisting Criteria***

*This Beneficial Use will no longer be impaired when the fish consumption advisories in the AOC are no more restrictive than the advisories for the same contaminants in suitable reference sites. Comparisons shall be based on samples collected in the same timeframe for a minimum of two consecutive sample events.*

# Assessment of Fish Consumption Restrictions

Together the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks and the University of Toronto have completed an assessment of the *Restrictions on Fish Consumption* BUI within the St. Marys River AOC. This assessment compared fish consumption advisories within the AOC to the advisories in the non-AOC reference site areas of Lake Superior and Lake Huron. The results indicated that these restrictions are similar to the non-AOC areas. Contaminants that were of concern included mercury and PCBs, which generally showed considerable improvements over the last 30+ years and have mostly continued to decline in recent years. These findings indicate that the levels of contaminants in fish within the St. Marys River have declined to an extent that the BUI can be considered *Not Impaired*. However, a fish consumption survey must still be conducted to better define and confirm what may be considered a non-restrictive diet of fish from the St. Marys River. Once completed this survey will be used by the St. Marys River RAP to develop a report on the *Restrictions on Fish Consumption* BUI and evaluate it's status. The Community Fish Consumption Survey is currently being developed and will be available online for public input soon.

*For more information on what fish are safe to eat and how much visit the Guide to Eating Ontario Fish on the Ontario.ca website*



ontario.ca/finnguide - ontario.ca/guidepoisson



## Fish Consumption Survey

The Stage 2 RAP Report lists all recommended actions and monitoring initiatives necessary to complete restorations of the AOC's beneficial uses. The Action *FFM-4: Fish Contaminant Monitoring Programs* states that a Community Fish Consumption Survey is needed to form a better understanding of fish consumption patterns and habits within the AOC. Creating and implementing this survey is an important action in moving forward with the evaluation and re-designation for the *Restrictions on Fish Consumption* BUI.

## Contact Information >>>

For more information about the initiatives being undertaken to restore the St. Marys River, visit our website at [bpac.algomau.ca](http://bpac.algomau.ca) or find us on

Social Media:

Facebook: St. Marys River Remedial Action Plan

Instagram: [stmarysriver\\_rap](https://www.instagram.com/stmarysriver_rap)

Twitter: [@StMarysRiverRAP](https://twitter.com/StMarysRiverRAP)

