

Spanish Harbour

Area of Concern in Recovery

NEWSLETTER

RESTRICTIONS ON FISH CONSUMPTION

WHAT IS AN AREA OF CONCERN IN RECOVERY? (AOCiR)

Areas of Concern (AOCs) are locations that were identified under the 1987 *Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement* as having experienced high levels of environmental harm. An Area of Concern in Recovery (AOCiR) means that all actions to restore water quality have been completed and the area now needs time to recover naturally .

WHAT IS A BENEFICIAL USE IMPAIRMENT? (BUI)

A list of 14 important indicators of ecosystem health. The impairment status of each of these BUIs reflects the ability of humans and other species to experience the Great Lakes without any negative effects. This months newsletter focuses on the Restriction on Fish Consumption BUI.

WHAT IS A REFERENCE SITE?

To obtain a better understanding of ecosystem health in the Spanish Harbour, we compared the data with nearby waterbodies which are referred to as "reference sites".

Is the Spanish Harbour an Area of Concern?

Due to historical discharges of pollutants from local industry and municipalities in 1987 the Spanish Harbour was designated as an AOC within the Great Lakes Basin. There are 14 BUIs used to determine the health of the Area of Concern. Currently 3 of these BUIs remain impaired for the Spanish Harbour. Over the past 30 years, there has been significant progress in restoring the water and environmental quality in the harbour. In 1999 the Spanish Harbour was re-designated as an Area of Concern in Recovery (AOCiR).

This means all the necessary restorative actions have been taken, and now the area needs time to recover. Once restoration has been confirmed for the remaining impaired BUIs the Spanish Harbour may be removed from the list of Great Lakes Areas of Concern. A recent study of the Spanish Harbour revealed that fish consumption advisories have been similar when compared to other Lake Huron reference sites. These findings support the delisting criteria to re-designate the Restrictions on fish consumption BUI to unimpaired.

DELISTING CRITERIA:

The *Restrictions on Fish Consumption* BUI will no longer be considered impaired when the fish consumption advisories for the Spanish Harbour are no more restrictive than advisories in nearby reference sites.



COMMUNITY FISH CONSUMPTION SURVEY

Before the Restrictions on Fish consumption BUI can be re-designated the final step is to conduct a community fish consumption survey.

This Survey will help to better define what may be considered a "non-restrictive" diet of fish from the Spanish Harbour.

The survey data will be used to develop a report on the Restriction of Fish Consumption BUI and evaluate its status.




DO YOU EAT FISH CAUGHT FROM THE SPANISH RIVER?

Visit bpac.algomau.ca or scan the QR code below to take the survey!



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For more information on what fish are safe to eat visit Ontario.ca/Fishguide