

Focus on: Freshwater Fish Contaminant Monitoring – Fall 2024

What are we doing?

Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) scientists collect fish to analyze for the presence of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), dioxins/furans, and other toxins in the Columbia River. Fish will be sampled from the following stations on the Columbia River in Washington this fall:

- Cathlamet (Wahkiakum)
- Willow Grove (Wahkiakum)
- Carrols Cottonwood Island (Cowlitz)
- Lewis River Mouth (Clark)
- Camas (Clark)
- Skamania (Skamania)
- Bonneville (Skamania)

We will collect largescale sucker, northern pikeminnow, and largemouth bass using boat-mounted electrofishing, nets, and angling. The monitoring period is from October through November; most sites will only take 1 – 2 days. Required state and federal scientific collection permits are issued for these samplings.

Why do we do this?

We study the amount of different contaminants in freshwater fish tissue to understand if contamination levels are a problem for human health and aquatic life and if they are changing over time. Each year, we visit locations throughout the state and return to each location every 8 – 12 years to see how contaminant levels change over time. It is important to monitor for contaminants because many persist in the environment, accumulate in the tissue of fish and humans, and are toxic in large amounts. Ecology last sampled the Columbia River in 2005 and 2016.

Results are coming soon!

Our 2024 results will be available as a written report on Ecology's webpage and through an online database. To view the laboratory data, visit Ecology's EIM database. All of these resources are linked on Ecology's [Freshwater fish contaminant monitoring webpage](#).^{1, QR}

The Washington State Department of Health (WA DOH) will use this project's data to offer guidance on how much fish can be safely eaten under specific circumstances. See the [WA DOH fish consumption advisories](#) for information on fish in your area.²

Related Links



¹<https://ecology.wa.gov/Research-Data/Monitoring-assessment/toxics-monitoring/Freshwater-fish-contaminant-monitoring>

²<https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/food/fish/advisories>

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ADA accessibility

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 564-669-3028 or email at EAPpubs@ecy.wa.gov, or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.