EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency

Region 10

Fishing in the Duwamish River

What did we learn and what do we do next?

February 2017

Fish Consumption Advisory

Fish are nutritious and good for your health. Many people enjoy fishing on the Duwamish River.

Unfortunately, the river has harmful chemicals, such as PCBs, that can cause health problems in humans. You cannot see these chemicals in the fish. They get into fish, shellfish and crab that spend their entire lives in the river ("resident fish").

The Washington State Department of Health recommends salmon as the healthiest choice to eat because they spend a short time in the river.

Environmental Justice Issue

Many fishers continue to catch and eat resident fish. Over 20 ethnic groups fish in the Duwamish River. The pollution in the river likely has more impacts on communities of color and low-income people.

Fishing for the Safest Seafood from the Duwamish River? Eat Salmon!

For the text of this poster, go to https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/334-330.pdf

New Study about the Duwamish Fishing Community

The United States Environmental Protection Agency is working to clean up the pollution from the Duwamish River. As part of the Lower Duwamish Waterway Superfund Cleanup, the City of Seattle, King County, Port of Seattle and The Boeing Company performed the Fishers Study (http://go.usa.gov/xnCsq). The study collected information about:

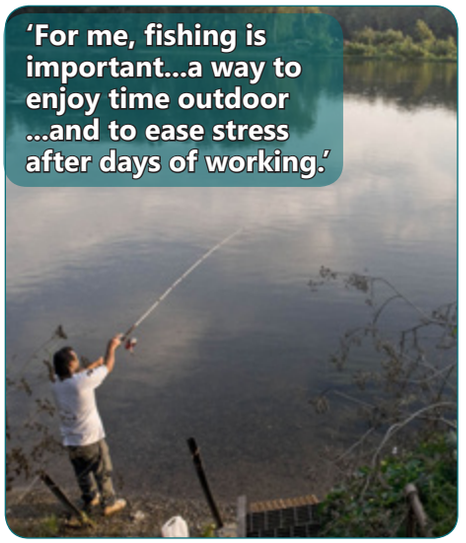
- Who is fishing on the Duwamish River?
- What are they doing with their catch?
- How much do they know about the advisory?
- What are better ways to communicate about the advisory?

Thank you to the fishers and other residents that participated in the study!

Environmental Coalition of South Seattle (ECOSS) collected data for the study (2014-2016):

- **403 surveys with fishers along the river**
- **22 in-depth interviews with fishers and people who eat Duwamish seafood**

What was learned

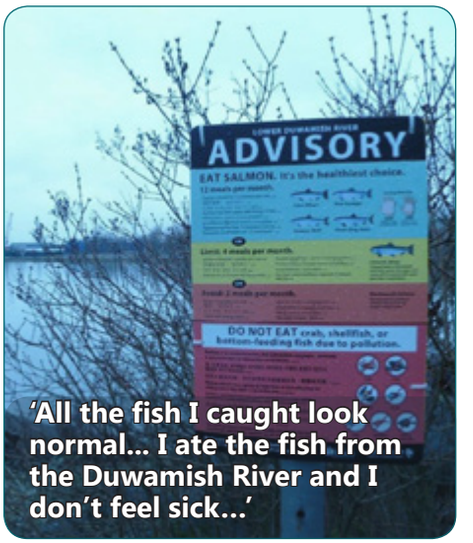


Fishing is good for mental, social and physical health:

- Fun
- Relaxing
- Fresh food
- Socializing
- Learn from each other
- Sense of community

Fishers who eat the polluted "resident fish" are primarily:

- Asian, Pacific Islanders, multiracial
- Non-English speakers (including Vietnamese, Spanish, Khmer)
- Live in South/West Seattle and south of Seattle



The advisory information is hard to understand:

- Signs are not effective in reaching all fishers
- Hard to connect health risks with chemicals that you cannot see in the water or fish
- Need to provide options that encourage people to eat healthier fish, while maintaining their fishing culture

What is next?

The EPA and Public Health Seattle & King County (PHSKC) will establish a community-based program to develop Institutional Controls or "ICs" for the Duwamish fishing community. The program will promote healthy seafood consumption before, during and after the cleanup. With EPA oversight, PHSKC will:

- Form a work group to help develop the IC plans and recommendations;
- Provide grants to community partnerships to develop and implement community-focused IC tools and strategies; and
- Train peer community health advocates to promote healthy fish consumption strategies within their communities.

For more information

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WA Department of Health: Fish Advisory Program • (877) 485-7316 • http://www.doh.wa.gov/fish

Community Advisory Group: Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition/Technical Advisory Group • (206) 954-0218 • duwamishcleanup.org

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