ADEM News

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT
OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ... FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE!

For more information, contact Catherine Lamar, David Granger or Clark Bruner at (334) 271-7709/7712

ADEM RELEASES 1995
FISH SAMPLING DATA

APRIL 1, 1996

Concentrations of PCBs and mercury in fish exceed Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidelines (the level at which certain precautions should be considered in regard to fish consumption) at eight of the approximately 25 sites sampled in 1995, according to data released by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management.

Approximately 300 fish were collected from 20 waterbodies in the state (see 1995 Fish Tissue Monitoring Sites) last fall as part of an expanded fish tissue testing program initiated by ADEM in 1991. The program was designed to check fish from major rivers and lakes in the state for pollutants with the potential to bioaccumulate. Concentrations of pollutants in fish collected in 1995 were below FDA guidance levels at all but eight sites.

PCB concentrations in composites (usually five to six fish) and two individual samples of edible portions (fillets) of fish at four sites on the Logan Martin Reservoir and at a site on Weiss Reservoir and on Choccolocco Creek exceeded the FDA guideline level of 2.0 parts per million (ppm) (See map attached).

Sampling in Blackwater River in Escambia County and in Fish River in Baldwin County showed concentrations of mercury above the FDA guidance level of 1.0 ppm . A Big Escambia Creek site yielded a sample which approached the FDA level for mercury (See map attached).

The Alabama Department of Public Health has had a "limited consumption" advisory for catfish on the Coosa River (between Logan Martin Dam and the Alabama/Georgia state line) in place since 1989. A "no consumption" advisory for all species on Snow Creek (from Oxford to the confluence with Choccolocco Creek) and Choccolocco Creek (from Snow Creek to the confluence with Logan Martin Lake) was established by the Health Department in 1993 based on ADEM fish sampling data indicating elevated PCB levels in fish. Additionally, "no consumption" advisories have been in effect since 1993 for all species in Cold Creek Swamp (adjacent to the Mobile River and approximately 10 miles south of the confluence of the Tombigbee and Alabama Rivers) in Mobile County and on largemouth bass and channel catfish on the Olin Basin in Washington County.

According to ADEM Acting Director Jim Warr, "These most recent data have been provided to epidemiologists with the Alabama Department of Public Health , and they have requested that ADEM analyze individual fish in those composites that exceeded FDA guidance levels. This process should be completed within the next few weeks and provide Health Department personnel with the additional information they need to make a decision regarding consumption guidance."

The 1995 ADEM fish tissue monitoring program also included an evaluation of the physical condition of important sport and/or commercial fish species using Relative Weights, an index of well-being or condition used by fishery biologists. A ranking of 80 to 100 is considered good to excellent; a score of 79 or below is considered fair to poor. A total of 192 fish were evaluated with 100% of the black crappie and channel catfish, 94% of the largemouth bass and 90% of the spotted bass falling into the good to excellent range.

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ADEM initiated the expanded fish tissue testing program in cooperation with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the Tennessee Valley Authority to check fish from the 28 major lakes in the state, 28 smaller lake and stream locations and 29 state fishing lakes maintained by DCNR. Priorities for sampling locations were developed by ADEM with input by cooperating agencies based on the degree of fishing activity. Samples are collected in the fall, the period during which pollutants, if present, would most likely be stored in fatty tissues in the highest concentrations. Fish are analyzed for PCBs, mercury, chlordane, toxaphene, mirex, DDT, DDD, DDE, dieldrin, dursban, endrin, heptachlor, heptachlor-epoxide and certain heavy metals.

ADEM 1996 FISH TISSUE SAMPLING SITES

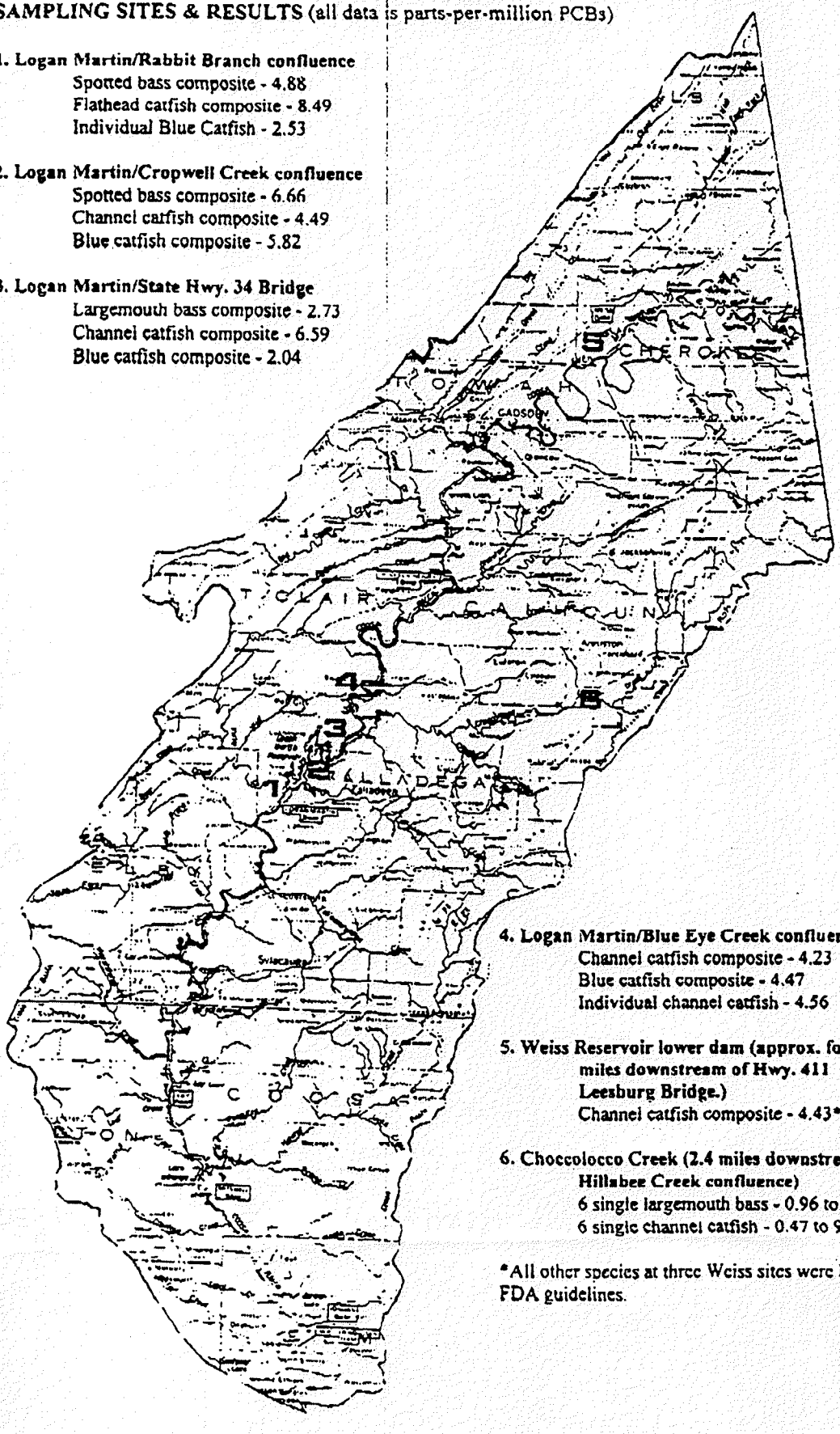
RIVER BASIN	WATER BODY	COUNTY	Location Description
APPALACHICOLA RIVER	BIG CREEK	HOUSTON	BIG CREEK, HOUSTON CO AT ST HW 55 BRIDGE CROSSING APPROX. 2 MILES UPSTREAM OF AL/FL STATE LINE
	COWARTS CREEK	HOUSTON	COWARTS CREEK AT AL HWY 53 BRIDGE CROSSING
CHOCTAWHATCHEE RIVER	PEA RIVER	GENEVA	PEA RIVER NEAR ITS CONFLUENCE WITH CHAWCTAWHATCHEE RIVER IN VICINITY OF AL HWY 27 BRIDGE CROSSING
COOSA RIVER	CHOCCOLOCCO CREEK	CALHOUN	CHOCCOLOCCO CREEK UNNUMBERED CO RD CROSSING APPROX 2.5 MILES E.SE OF OXFORD. 1/2 MILE EITHER SIDE OF BRIDGE 2.4 MILES DOWNSTREAM OF HILLABEE CK &CHOCCOLOCCO CK CONFLUENCE.
	LOGAN MARTIN LAKE	TALLADEGA/ST. CLAIR	COOSA RIVER, LOGAN MARTIN LAKE ALABAMA POWER RESERVOIR MILE 2.0 VICINITY OF RABBIT BRANCH CONFLUENCE APPROX. 14 MILES DOWNSTREAM OF CHOCCOLOCCO CK CONFLUENCE.
	LOGAN MARTIN LAKE	TALLADEGA/ST. CLAIR	COOSA RIVER,LOGAN MARTIN LAKE ALABAMA POWER RESERVOIR MILE 7.5 VICINITY OF CROPWELL CK CONFLUENCE. APPROX. 9 MILES DOWNSTREAM OF CHOCCOLOCCO CK CONFLUENCE IN GRIFFIT BEND
	LOGAN MARTIN LAKE	TALLADEGA/ST. CLAIR	COOSA RIVER, LOGAN MARTIN LAKE ALABAMA POWER RESERVOIR MILE 12.5 VICINITY OF ST HWY 34 BRIDGE CROSSING (STEMLEY BRIDGE) APPROX. 2.5 MILES DOWNSTREAM OF CHCCCOLOCCO CK CONFLUENCE.
	LOGAN MARTIN LAKE	TALLADEGA/ST. CLAIR	LOGAN MARTIN AT RIVERSIDE NEAR THE CONFLUENCE OF BLUE EYE CREEK. ALABAMA POWER RESERVOIR MILE 20.0 (VICINITY OF INTERSTATE 20 BRIDGE) 5.6 MILES UPSTREAM OF CHOCCOLOCCO CREEK
	WEISS RESERVOIR	CHEROKEE	POWER PLANT FOREBAY (LOWER DAM) APPROX. 4 MILES DOWNSTREAM OF HW 411 LEESBURG BRIDGE
	WEISS RESERVOIR	CHEROKEE	WEISS RESERVOIR AT CEDAR BLUFF; ALABAMA POWER RESERVOIR MILE 10.0-11.0
	WEISS RESERVOIR	CHEROKEE	WEISS RESERVOIR AT THE ALABAMA/GEORGIA STATE LINE; ALABAMA POWER RESERVOIR MILE 29.0
ESCATAWPA RIVER	BIG CREEK RESERVOIR	MOBILE	BIG CREEK RESERVOIR,BIG CREEK,LAKE WIDE SAMPLE
	ESCATAWPA RIVER	MOBILE	ESCATAWPA RIVER,MOBILE CO. AT US HW 98 BRIDGE CROSSING . APPROX 1/10 MILE UPSTREAM OF AL/MS STATE LINE
MOBILE BAY	FISH RIVER	BALDWIN	FISH RIVER IN VICINITY OF CONFLUENCE WITH POLECAT CREEK. APPROX ONE MILE UPSTREAM OF CO. RD. 32 BRIDGE CROSSING.
PERDIDO/ESCAMBIA RIVER	BIG ESCAMBIA CREEK	ESCAMBIA	BIG ESCAMBIA CREEK AT LOUISVILLE&NASHVILLE RR BRIDGE CROSSING APPROX. 1/2 MILE UPSTREAM OF AL/FL STATE LINE
	BLACKWATER RIVER	ESCAMBIA	BLACKWATER RIVER, ESCAMBIA COUNTY BETWEEN CO. RD. 4 BRIDGE AND AL/FL STATE LINE
	CONECUH RIVER	ESCAMBIA	CONECUH RIVER AT POLLARD LANDING
	GANTT LAKE	COVINGTON	CONECUH RIVER, GANTT LAKE, LAKE WIDE SAMPLE
	LITTLE ESCAMBIA CREEK	ESCAMBIA	LITTLE ESCAMBIA CREEK, ESCAMBIA CO. AT US HW 31/29 BRIDGE CROSSING 2.8 MILES UPSTREAM OF AL/FL STATE LINE
	PERDIDO RIVER	BALDWIN	PERDIDO RIVER NEARITS CONFLUENCE WITH STYX RIVER IN VICINITY OF US HWY 90 BRIDGE CROSSING
	STYX RIVER	BALDWIN	STYX RIVER NEAR ITS CONFLUENCE WITH PERDIDO RIVER IN VICINITY OF US HWY 90 BRIDGE CROSSING
	YELLOW RIVER	COVINGTON	YELLOW RIVER,COVINGTON CO. AT COUNTY ROAD 4 BRIDGE CROSSING APPROX. 1 1/2 MILES UPSTREAM OF AL/FL STATE LINE
WARRIOR RIVER	INLAND RESERVOIR	BLOUNT	INLAND LAKE AT REMLAP, LAKE WIDE SAMPLE
	LAKE LURLEEN	TUSCALOOSA	LAKE LURLEEN, LAKE LURLEEN STATE PARK, LAKE WIDE SAMPLE
	LAKE NICHOL	TUSCALOOSA	YELLOW CREEK, LAKE NICHOL, LAKE WIDE SAMPLE

LOGAN MARTIN RESERVOIR/WEISS RESERVOIR/CHOCCOLOCCO CREEK SAMPLING SITES & RESULTS (all data is parts-per-million PCBs)

1. Logan Martin/Rabbit Branch confluence
Spotted bass composite - 4.88
Flathead catfish composite - 8.49
Individual Blue Catfish - 2.53

2. Logan Martin/Cropwell Creek confluence
Spotted bass composite - 6.66
Channel catfish composite - 4.49
Blue catfish composite - 5.82

3. Logan Martin/State Hwy. 34 Bridge
Largemouth bass composite - 2.73
Channel catfish composite - 6.59
Blue catfish composite - 2.04



4. Logan Martin/Blue Eye Creek confluence
Channel catfish composite - 4.23
Blue catfish composite - 4.47
Individual channel catfish - 4.56

5. Weiss Reservoir lower dam (approx. four miles downstream of Hwy. 411 Leesburg Bridge.)
Channel catfish composite - 4.43*

6. Choccolocco Creek (2.4 miles downstream of Hillabee Creek confluence)
6 single largemouth bass - 0.96 to 41.91
6 single channel catfish - 0.47 to 9.26

*All other species at three Weiss sites were below FDA guidelines.

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BLACKWATER RIVER/BIG ESCAMBIA CREEK/FISH RIVER
SAMPLING SITES AND RESULTS (all data is parts-per-million mercury)

1. Blackwater River (between Escambia County Road 4 Bridge and Alabama-Florida state line)

Individual largemouth bass - 1.47

2. Big Escambia Creek (L&N Railroad crossing, approximately one-half mile upstream of Alabama-Florida state line)

Largemouth bass composite - 0.99

3. Fish River/Pole Cat Creek confluence

Largemouth bass composite - 1.29