



According to the EPA, although mercury can become airborne from natural sources like volcanoes and forest fires, the majority of airborne mercury is primarily from the burning of coal, oil, wood and wastes, with coal-fueled power plants accounting for the largest source of mercury emissions. The airborne mercury can fall to the ground in raindrops, in dust, or by gravity.

A sign at the Elkhart Lake public boat launch informs of the mercury issue, and provides guidelines for safe fish eating.

According to Beranek, Elkhart Lake “was sampled for fish tissue mercury in 1994, 1999, and 2014. Fish tissue sampling and analysis takes time and there are many other lakes across the state that are in the same situation. Big Elkhart Lake’s mercury listing was listed based on the 1994 samples and kept based on the 1999 and 2014 samples. Unfortunately, there is mercury in all Wisconsin lakes, which is why there is a general mercury consumption advisory for all lakes in the state

([dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Fishing/consumption](http://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Fishing/consumption)). For Big Elkhart and Lake Michigan the concentrations of mercury in fish tissue are higher than the state advisory, and so these lakes got specific advisories.

“While Big Elkhart Lake has high mercury in fish tissue, other analyses have shown the lake to be in good condition. In this assessment period we evaluated phosphorus, algae, and aquatic plants and all indicate a healthy lake system,” Beranek said.

Lake Michigan and a 14 mile section of the Sheboygan River remain on the list for PCBs contaminated fish tissue. PCBs are industrial chemicals banned in 1979.

The DNR is seeking public comments on the lists until October 1. The DNR is hoping to receive comments in support of listings, questioning listings people think may be incorrect, asking after listings they think are missing, and any general questions people may have, according to Beranek.

Comments can be sent by email to:

[DNRWYWaterbodyAssessments@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNRWYWaterbodyAssessments@wisconsin.gov)

Or by mail to:

Department of Natural Resources

c/o Ashley Beranek, Water Quality

P.O. Box 7921 Madison, WI 53707

This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. [Learn how your comment data is processed.](#)