



Government of Yukon

Government of Yukon » August 2011 » News Release #11-135

Newsroom

Latest news releases

News by theme

News by department

Community Services
Economic Development
Education
Energy, Mines and Resources
Environment
Executive Council Office
Finance
French Language Services
Directorate
Health and Social Services
Highways and Public Works
Justice
Public Service Commission
Tourism and Culture
Women's Directorate

News by corporations

Yukon Development
Corporation
Yukon Energy Corporation
Yukon Housing Corporation
Yukon Liquor Corporation
Yukon Workers'
Compensation Health and
Safety Board

Joint news releases

Premier's News

News by date

2017 news releases

January
February
March
April
May
June
July
August
September
October
November
December

News archive



NEWS *release*

- Eating Yukon fish
- Mercury in Yukon Fish



FOR RELEASE #11-135
August 31, 2011



Health advisory lifted after 20 years

WHITEHORSE—Twenty years after it was erected, a sign cautioning against fishing in Lake Laberge has been removed and the related health advisory has been lifted.

Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health Brendan Hanley took the sign down earlier this week.

"This sign went up in 1991 warning people not to consume fish caught in Lake Laberge because of high toxaphene levels," said Hanley. "Monitoring of fish stock over the years has shown us that toxaphene is no longer an issue in the lake so it's time for the sign to come down and for the advisory to be lifted."

Health and Social Services Minister Glenn Hart said the change is a positive step and will reflect well on the importance of monitoring contaminants in fish and wildlife in Yukon.

Hanley said the reduced levels of toxaphene may be a result of reductions in global emissions, as well as changes in the lake's ecosystem, since the closing of the lake to commercial fishing in 1991.

"What we do know is that fish stocks are up, while levels of toxaphene are down significantly and the fish are suitable for consumption," said Hanley.

More information on safe fish consumption is available at www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca or visit www.hss.gov.yk.ca/mercury.php.

-30-

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