



# Volunteers Collecting Fish For Mercury Analysis

January 2023

## Purpose:

NHDES' Fish Tissue Mercury Monitoring Program measures the concentration of mercury in fish from lakes and rivers throughout New Hampshire to inform consumption advisories. The data are also used to study changes in mercury content in fish tissue over time and characterize mercury concentrations in different fish species.

The monitoring program relies on volunteer anglers donating the fish they catch for mercury analysis. This guidance document explains what type of fish to donate and the collection procedures.

## Species of interest:

### *Primary*

**Yellow Perch (6 – 12 in)**

**Largemouth Bass (10 – 16 in)**

**Smallmouth Bass (10 – 16 in)**

### *Secondary*

**Black Crappie    Northern Pike**

**Lake Trout    Bluegill (≥ 5 in)**

**Walleye    White Perch (6 – 12 in)**

**Note:** A minimum of five individuals per year within the recommended size range of the primary species is required. They do not need to be collected on the same day but should be within a few weeks of each other. Single individuals of the secondary species can be submitted for analysis.

## Collection procedures:

1. Fish must be collected according to the laws and regulations listed in the New Hampshire Freshwater Fishing Digest (See [Fishing Regulations](#)), published by the NHFG. A valid New Hampshire fishing license is required. Anglers are responsible for following bag limits, size restrictions, open seasons, legal methods of capture, and waterbody specific regulations.
2. Place fish in a plastic zip-lock freezer bag. Wrapping each fish with aluminum foil before bagging is preferred. Keep fish away from unclean or painted surfaces.

3. Create a label. Options: Writing with permanent marker on the plastic bag or a pencil on heavy stock paper that is placed inside or taped to the bag.
4. Include the following information on the label. A label printout is available below:
  1. Waterbody name and town.
  2. Date of collection.
  3. Common name of fish species.
  4. Number of fish included.
  5. Name of collector.
  6. Contact information for collector (email, phone number and/or mailing address).
5. Place fish on ice in a clean ice chest. Freeze fish within 24 hours of collection.
6. Fish should be submitted for processing as soon as possible to the NHDES Jody Connor Limnology Center at 29 Hazen Drive in Concord. Contact Max Maynard ([Maxwell.T.Maynard@des.nh.gov](mailto:Maxwell.T.Maynard@des.nh.gov) or [\(603\) 271-2968](tel:6032712968)) to coordinate drop-offs.

**Note:** Participation in this program is separate from the NHDES Volunteer Lake Assessment Program (VLAP). If you or your organization is a VLAP participant, please be sure to use the contact information provided above. Participation in this program is open to any person or organization wishing to submit fish for analysis from New Hampshire waterbodies.

Label Example:

Waterbody:		Town:	
Collection Date:		Fish (species & #):	
Collector (Name & Contact Information):			