

# 2009 LOWER YARRA RIVER FISH STUDY RESULTS

The Yarra River and its catchment have a long history of industrial, agricultural and urban activities. These activities have led to contaminants being recorded in the river sediments and in the fish that live in the Yarra River.

Over the past decade, the lower Yarra River has increasingly been used for recreational activities including fishing. The community's interest in the concentrations of contaminants in fish that may be caught and eaten from the lower Yarra River led to studies in 2005 and 2006.

View previous fish study results at:

<http://www.oem.vic.gov.au/Previousfishstudyresults>.

The 2009 Lower Yarra River Fish Study was conducted by EPA Victoria. The study sampled fish from the lower Yarra River in January and February 2009 to check if the contaminant concentrations had significantly changed since the previous study in 2006.

Eighty black bream were analysed for the same contaminants tested in previous fish studies including heavy metals such as copper, arsenic and mercury and organic chemicals such as agricultural pesticides and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

The results found that the contaminant concentrations in fish sampled in 2009 were generally lower than the concentrations recorded in 2006 and were below the guideline levels for Australian Food Standards.

## Snap shot of the 2009 Lower Yarra River Fish Study results

	Contaminant	Concentration
Organic chemicals	Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)	Less than the 2006 results
	Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT)	Less than the 2006 results
	Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDE)	No greater than the 2006 results
	Dioxins and dioxin like PCBs	No greater than the 2006 results
	Organophosphate pesticides	Less than the LOR*
	Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons	Less than the LOR*
Heavy metals	Inorganic arsenic, cadmium and chromium	Less than the LOR*
	Total arsenic, copper and zinc	Less than the 2006 results
	Lead, mercury and selenium	No greater than the 2006 results
	Tributyltin (TBT)	No greater than the 2006 results

\* LOR: Limit of Reporting – lowest detectable concentration of contaminant that can be reliably reported.

View the 2009 Lower Yarra River Fish Study technical report:

<http://www.oem.vic.gov.au/Fishstudyresults>.



The results were scrutinised by a group of independent experts with specialist knowledge in human health, contaminants and eco-toxicology. The Independent Expert Group was satisfied that the 2009 results were scientifically valid.

View the independent expert report:

<http://www.oem.vic.gov.au/Fishstudyresults>.

The 2009 results confirm that fish from the lower Yarra River are still safe to eat.

The results mean that the current health advisory for people who catch fish from the lower Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers does not change.

While it is still safe to eat fish caught from these rivers, recreational anglers are still advised to limit themselves to four serves of fish a month and one serve of eel a month, and children and women of child bearing age should limit themselves to one serve of fish per month and should not eat eels caught from the lower Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers.

View the current health advisory at:

<http://www.oem.vic.gov.au/AdviceforpeoplewhocatchandeatfishfromtheYarraandMaribyrnongRivers>.

The 2009 Lower Yarra River Fish Study was the third fish study. Similar studies were held in 2005 and 2006, and a fourth study is planned for 2011.

The 2009 study was one of nine environmental monitoring programs required in the Channel Deepening Project's Environmental Management Plan. During the assessment of the Channel Deepening Project, Yarra River sediments were examined for metals and organic compounds to consider any effects to human health.

The assessment identified no likely health risk concerns for bay users, including recreational anglers, as a result of dredging contaminated sediment. The results from the 2009 Lower Yarra River Fish Study support this finding.

## For more information

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