In July 2001, MA DPH issued new consumer advisories on fish consumption and mercury content. The MA DPH* is advising pregnant women, women of childbearing age who may become pregnant, nursing mothers, and children under 12 years of age to refrain from eating the following species: black, whitefish, king mackerel, tuna steaks, and lima fish. In addition, MA DPH is expanding its previously issued state-wide fish consumption advisory which contains pregnant women to avoid eating fish from all freshwater lakes due to concerns about mercury contamination. This new advisory now includes women of childbearing age who may become pregnant, nursing mothers, and children under 12 years of age. Finally, MA DPH is recommending that pregnant women, women of childbearing age who may become pregnant, nursing mothers, and children under 12 years of age limit their consumption of fish and shellfish to no more than two meals (or about 2 ounces) of cooked or canned fish per week. This recommendation is based on recent data and is the maximum number of which should be eaten in two (2) days per week. Very small children, including infants, should not eat. Consumers may wish to choose to eat light tuna rather than white or chunk white tuna, (the latter of which may have higher levels of mercury).

MA DPH’s statement above does not include fish stocked by the states (Rhode Island and Massachusetts) or farm-raised fish sold commercially.

Since this state-wide advisory encompasses all freshwater lakes in Massachusetts, the Fish Consumption Use Advisory for state-wide lakes continues to be issued annually.

North East Regional Mercury TMDL: On 20 December 2007 the U.S. EPA approved the Northeast Regional Mercury Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). This TMDL is a Federal Clean Water Act mandated document that identifies policies and local regulations necessary for remedial actions to treat and maintain compliance with state and federal water quality standards. It was prepared by the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIPCC) in cooperation with the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The TMDL covers inland waterbodies that are impaired primarily due to atmospheric deposition of mercury (Northeast States 2007). The TMDL target for Massachusetts is 0.00040 g/L or less of total mercury in fish tissue. The state calls for a 10% reduction of mercury out of Total Mercury in Lake and Stream (TMDL) for TMDL for lakes.

Figure 2: Chicopee River Basin Fish Consumption Use Assessment Summary

- Dwight
- Chicopee
- Indian Orchard
- Putts Bridge
- Collins
- Simple Bridge