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CONTACT: Mark Shaffer, Director of Communications, (602) 771-2215

## **ADEQ Announces Mercury Fish Consumption Advisories for Lake Pleasant and Roosevelt Lake**

PHOENIX (April 24, 2009) – The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality today announced that ADEQ, in association with the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Arizona Department of Health Services, has issued a fish consumption advisory recommending that people limit consumption of certain fish caught from Lake Pleasant and Roosevelt Lake.

The inclusion of Lake Pleasant, north of Phoenix in Maricopa County, and Roosevelt Lake, northwest of Globe in Gila County, brings the total number of lakes in Arizona affected by fish consumption advisories for mercury to 13.

Tissue samples taken by ADEQ of fish caught from the two lakes and analyzed recently by ADEQ contain elevated levels of mercury. The fish covered by the consumption advisory are largemouth bass taken in Lake Pleasant and largemouth bass and channel catfish in Roosevelt Lake. The advisory does not limit use of the lakes for fishing, bird watching, swimming or other recreational uses. ADEQ has taken a conservative approach in assessing the risks associated with eating fish from the lakes. In addition, there is no limit on eating sunfish such as black crappie, bluegill, green sunfish and red-ear from either lake.

Fish are an excellent source of protein and can be an important part of a healthy, diverse diet. Because mercury has been detected in some fish from these two lakes, it is prudent to advise the public and offer this consumption advisory.

“Consuming fish contaminated with mercury is the most common method of human exposure to mercury,” said ADEQ Acting Director Patrick J. Cunningham. “While we continue to work to reduce mercury pollution in Arizona’s water bodies, these fish consumption advisories are an important part of our effort to protect public health.”

The advisory contains the following consumption recommendations:

### **Lake Pleasant—largemouth bass:**

- Children under the age of six: **No consumption**
- Women of child bearing age and children between 6-16 years old: **One 8 oz. fish meal per month**

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- All other adult women: **One 8 oz. fish meal per month unless a doctor supports a higher consumption rate.**
- Adult men: **Five 8 oz. fish meals per month.**

**Roosevelt Lake—largemouth bass and channel catfish:**

- Children under the age of six: **No consumption**
- Women of child bearing age and children between 6-16 years old: **One 8 oz. fish meal per month**
- All other adult women: **One 8 oz. fish meal per month unless a doctor supports a higher consumption rate.**
- Adult men: **Five 8 oz. fish meals per month**

Mercury in the environment can come from various sources and can cause numerous health problems when ingested, most notably its toxicity to the central nervous system. Infants and pregnant or nursing mothers are considered most at risk to possible health effects. Mercury is quickly absorbed by bacteria in sediments and passed along via the food chain to living organisms. Fish can accumulate elevated levels of mercury when larger fish consume smaller fish and insects which have become contaminated, a process called bioaccumulation.

In addition to Lake Pleasant and Roosevelt Lake, fish consumption advisories remain in place for the following water bodies in Arizona: Arivaca Lake, Alamo Lake, Parker Canyon Lake, Upper Lake Mary, Lower Lake Mary, Lyman Lake, Pena Blanca Lake, Coors Lake, Soldier Lake, Soldier Annex Lake and Long Lake.

For more information, see ADEQ/s fish consumption advisory fact sheet <http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/water/assessment/ongoing.html#merc>, frequently asked questions about Roosevelt Lake <http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/water/assessment/download/fish-roosevelt.pdf>, frequently asked questions about Lake Pleasant <http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/water/assessment/download/fish-pleasant.pdf>, the EPA's consumption advisories [www.epa.gov/mercury/advisories.htm](http://www.epa.gov/mercury/advisories.htm), and Game and Fish's consumption advisory [www.azgfd.gov/h\\_f/fish\\_consumption.shtml](http://www.azgfd.gov/h_f/fish_consumption.shtml) .

ADEQ officials are continuing to test Lake Pleasant and Roosevelt Lake to identify the source of contamination. The advisories will remain in effect until further notice.