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ADEQ Lifts Fish Consumption Advisory for Gila River and Tributaries

PHOENIX (September 30, 2015) – The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) announced today that it has lifted the consumption advisory for fish caught in the Gila River and its tributaries within and downstream of the Phoenix metropolitan area – this includes 100 miles of streams and 286 acres of lakes. Fish caught from these waters are no longer unsafe to eat due to banned pesticides (DDT, chlordane or toxaphene).

“This is the first time ADEQ has lifted a fish consumption advisory,” said ADEQ Water Quality Division Director Trevor Baggiore. “Fish tested by ADEQ and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service show that banned pesticides no longer pose a health risk in the Gila River and its tributaries.”

Lifting this advisory, which has been in place for 24 years, is credited to the cessation of the use of the pesticides in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Detailed information about the delisting of the Gila River and its tributaries can be found at:

https://www.azdeq.gov/environ/water/assessment/download/delisting_hassayampa.pdf

ADEQ and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service tested 67 fish tissue samples from eight different fish species in the Gila River and several of its tributaries west of Phoenix during 2011 and 2012. Fish tissue data demonstrated banned pesticide levels (DDT, toxaphene and chlordane) dropped from more than 160 times higher than threshold levels designed to protect human health in the 1990’s, to 16 times lower than these thresholds in 2011 and 2012.

On March 10, 2015, ADEQ requested that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) remove the Gila River and its tributaries from Arizona’s Impaired Waters List, which EPA approved August 7, 2015. Each water body removed from the list also had a fish consumption advisory in effect. ADEQ has lifted the fish consumption advisory for the following waterbodies:

Reach Description	Miles/Acres
Salt River – 23rd Ave WWTP to Gila River	14.1 miles
Gila River – Salt River to Agua Fria River	3.7 miles
Gila River – Agua Fria River to Waterman Wash	11.9 miles
Gila River – Waterman Wash to Hassayampa River	13.9 miles
Gila River – Hassayampa to Centennial Wash	7 miles
Gila River – Centennial Wash to Gillespie Dam	5.3 miles
Gila River – Gillespie Dam to Rainbow Wash	5.1 miles
Gila River – Rainbow Wash to Sand Tank	16.9 miles
Gila River – Sand Tank to Painted Rock Reservoir	19.7 miles
Hassayampa River – Buckeye Canal to Gila River	2.3 miles
Painted Rock Reservoir	100 acres
Painted Rock Borrow Pit Lake	186 acres

ADEQ Lifts Fish Consumption Advisory for Gila River and Tributaries (cont.)



RESOURCES:

ADEQ Fish Consumption Advisory Fact Sheet:

<https://www.azdeq.gov/enviro/water/assessment/download/fca.pdf>

ADEQ Water Quality Division Monitoring and Assessment:

<http://www.azdeq.gov/enviro/water/assessment/index.html>

Arizona Game and Fish Department – Arizona Fish Consumption Advisory List:

http://www.azgfd.gov/h_f/fish_consumption.shtml

About ADEQ

Established by the Arizona Legislature under the Environmental Quality Act of 1986, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality is the state agency responsible for protecting and enhancing public health and the environment of Arizona.

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