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Press Release

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Alaska fish consumption guidelines expand species on unrestricted list

Small halibut, lingcod, grayling, Dolly Varden and black rockfish among new species

ANCHORAGE — Expanded fish testing data and epidemiological studies have prompted the state to release new fish consumption guidelines that increase the number of fish species on the “unrestricted consumption” list.

“These guidelines continue to underscore the health benefits associated with eating fish and the cultural importance of fishing,” said Ali Hamade, the Environmental Public Health Program Manager. “We encourage Alaskans to use these guidelines in addition to the state’s fish monitoring program resources for making healthful fish consumption choices. The guidelines recommend unrestricted consumption of many fish species from Alaska waters, particularly those most frequently consumed by Alaskans.”

In addition to the many fish species that were already listed in the “unrestricted consumption” category in the previous guidelines — such as all five species of Alaska salmon — a number of other species were added to this category in the updated guidelines, including halibut up to 40 pounds, lingcod measuring up to 35 inches, Arctic cisco, big skate, black rockfish, broad whitefish, Dolly Varden, dusky rockfish, grayling, humpback whitefish, least cisco, sablefish (black cod), and rough eye rockfish.

Although the new guidelines do not vary much from those issued by the Division of Public Health in 2007, new epidemiology studies and more fish-testing data from the ADEC fish monitoring program made it necessary to revise them. These guidelines provide recommendations that Alaskans, particularly women of childbearing age and parents of children, can use to make healthful fish dietary choices.

Multiple agencies collaborated in establishing the guidelines, including the Department of Health and Social Services, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Alaska Native Health Consortium, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

The new fish consumption guidelines along with a one-page, public-friendly fish consumption calculator are available at: <http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/eh/fish/default.htm>.

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