

# Users Guide to the Fish Mercury Access Portal

## Opening Page

The opening page gives a brief description of the data available from the Access Portal. It presents the two different methods of accessing the data: from a Geographic Information System (GIS) map, or from text boxes containing lists of variables selected by the user.

## GIS Search



The GIS Search allows the user to get information about a lake using the mouse. A map of Massachusetts displays blue and red dots. Each dot represents a lake where MassDEP conducts fish monitoring. Red dots represent lakes where fish consumption advisories have been issued by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Fish advisories are issued when mercury in fish is greater than 0.5 mg/kg. Blue dots represent monitored lakes where mercury in fish is on average less than 0.5 mg/kg.

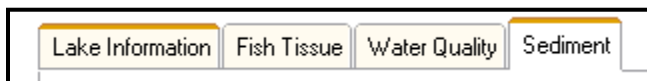
Use the mouse to click on a lake. A pop-up window gives the following information about the lake:



- Lake ID number
- Lake name
- Town
- County
- Type of fish advisory, if any
- Link to Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife Pond Map and fishing information, if available.
- Directions to the lake.

Click on the blue text for definitions of the fish advisories, a map of the lake and information on fishing, or driving directions to the lake.

Tabs underneath the map labeled “Lake Information,” “Fish Tissue,” “Water Quality,” “Sediment” allow



you to view the data in those categories for the selected lake by clicking the mouse on the tab. The data may then be exported to an Excel worksheet by clicking the mouse on the “Export to Workbook” button.

[Export To Workbook](#)

When the Excel workbook opens, click on the tab at the bottom of the page to view the information. Move the space bar at the bottom of the page to the right to view all the data columns. The Excel workbook may then be saved in your files for later use.

To zoom in on a lake, press the “shift” key, click the mouse on the lake you want to zoom in on and drag the mouse to create a rectangular frame around the lake. Release the mouse. This creates a map image of the lake, with the scale of the map shown in the upper right corner. The wand-shaped tool on the upper left side of the map can also be used to zoom in on a map feature. Press the “+” sign to zoom in or the “-” sign to zoom out. The arrows pointing in four directions above the zoom tool allow you to move the orientation of the map feature to the north, south, east or west. If you click on the map with the mouse, and then drag the mouse, you will also be able to move the orientation of the map feature (pan). To return to the original map, click on “reset the map”. The two buttons under the heading “history” allow you to scroll forward (🔍) or backward (🔍) through the views.



The “Data Layers” button allows you to turn off map features, such as the red dots.

## Text Search

The text search application is designed to make it easy to download data from many lakes. You can select the lakes from a pick-list that sorts them either by town or by the lake name. You can also select your data by species, year collected and season collected. Scroll through the lake names and click on the lakes from which to download data. Then scroll through the years and seasons, clicking on the ones you want. Select the species and analytes in the same way.

| Gis Search   Text Search   Advisory Information   Help Documents               |                 |  |  |
|--|-----------------|--|--|
| Select: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Lake |                 |  |  |
| Lake Name:   | Year:           | Seasons:   |  |
| All Lakes  | All Years       | All Season   |  |
| Amesbury, Lake Attitash  | 1994            | fall   |  |
| Andover, Haggetts Pond   | 1999            | spring   |  |
| Andover, Pumps Pond  |                 |  |  |
| Ashburnham, Upper Naukeag  |                 |  |  |
| Fish Tissue   Water Quality   Sediment   |                 |  |  |
| Species:   | Analyte:        | Age From:  |  |
| All Species  | All Analytes    | Age To:  |  |
| Brown bullhead   | Mercury (total) | Sex: <input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female |  |
| Largemouth bass  |                 |  |  |
| Smallmouth bass  |                 |  |  |
| Yellow bullhead  |                 |  |  |

When you have finished selecting the types of data you want, click on the search button.

[Search](#)

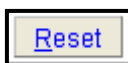
The data are downloaded into the table below. Using the tabs at the bottom of the page, you may view the categories of data by clicking the tab with the mouse. Move the space bar at the bottom of the table to the right to see all the columns of data.



If you want to download the data into an Excel spreadsheet for later analysis or other use, click on the button “Export to Workbook”. The workbook maybe saved in the manner normally used for saving files from within Excel.



To clear the data table or start over with different variable selections, click the “Reset” button.



## Additional Information

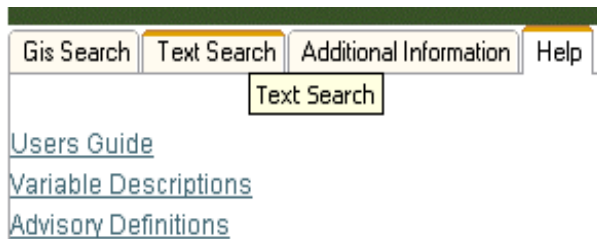
**Fish Tissue Monitoring Research Program Description:** Click here to learn about the studies that produced the data available from this data portal.

**Frequently Asked Questions:** Click here to learn more about mercury in the environment in a question-and-answer format.

**Lakes Without Advisories:** Click here for a list of Massachusetts lakes that have been tested for mercury in fish, where fish were found to contain on average less than 0.5 mg/kg mercury, and therefore did not require fish advisories. The data portal gives access to data from *monitored* lakes only that have been part of the Department’s fish mercury research program, where fish are collected and analyzed over multiple years. Many more lakes in the Commonwealth have been tested. Those data are not available through this database. This link lists the lakes where fish consumption advisories were not required.

## Help

The Help tab contains three links:



The first links the user to this Users Guide. The second link describes the variables in greater detail than that given in the variable column headings. The third links to an explanation of the fish advisory codes used by Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

## **Data Usage and Publication Policy**

The purpose of this statement is to provide some guidelines for usage, reporting and publication of data presented in this Commonwealth of Massachusetts database. It is not the intent of this policy to restrict data usage or availability.

All of the fish mercury data have been obtained and analyzed using funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Therefore, the data are public domain. However, MassDEP encourages prudent usage, awareness of the data quality, and professional courtesy when obtaining and using data from this database. Please acknowledge the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection as the source of the data when using data from this website in published research.