NLFA Technical Advisories Search User's Guide

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document provides instructions to assist users with searching the EPA's NLFA Technical Advisories interactive search and mapping website (Figure 1). This website and search provide historical data on fish advisories in the United States and its territories. Unlike the "Advisories Where You Live" search where users can search waterbodies in the United States and it territories, even those without advisories, the Technical Advisories search include only waterbodies under advisory. If a waterbody does not appear in the list of waterbodies, then there is either no advisory on that waterbody or recent changes made by the state have not been incorporated into the NLFA database.

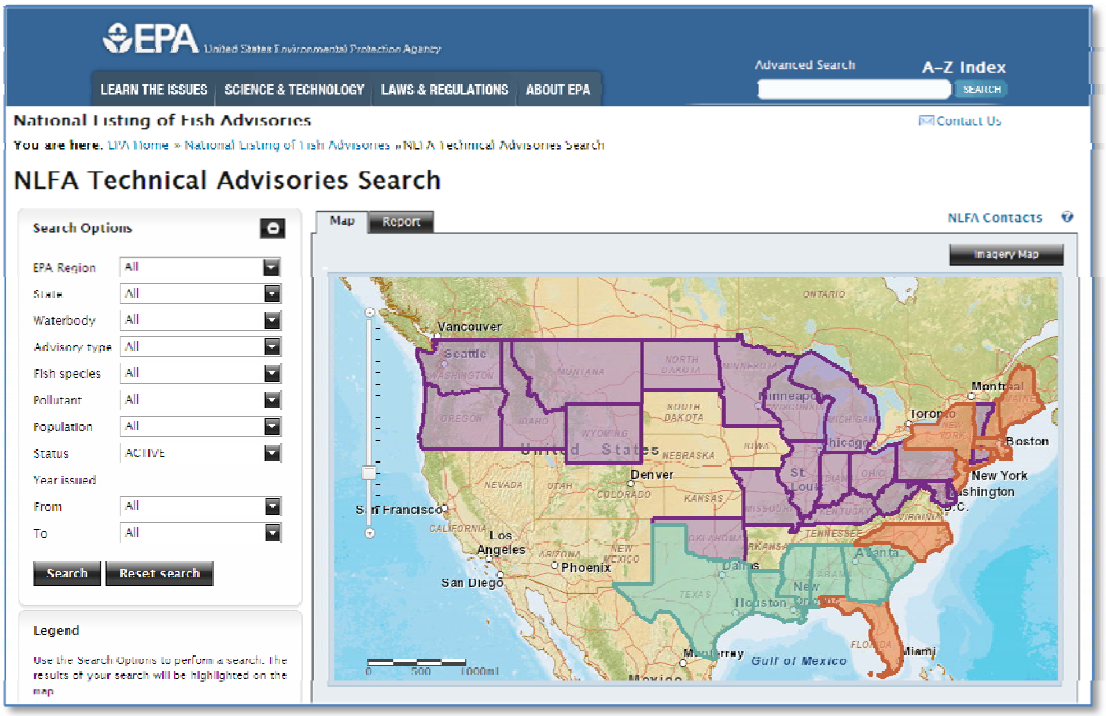


Figure 1. NLFA Technical Advisories Search

The Technical Advisories Search allows users to search using multiple criteria and obtain detailed advisory data results. A drop-down search form with type-ahead functionality allows the user to search the technical advisory information and fish tissue contaminant data attributes. Users can then choose to display the results in map format, table format, or as a downloadable spreadsheet or PDF report. To conduct a simple search of advisories by state and waterbody name, please go to NLFA Advisories Where You Live.

2.0 OPTIONS FOR CONDUCTING A SEARCH

The Technical Advisories Search allows users to search for advisories based one or more search options. To the left of the main map is the **Search Options** box (Figure 2).

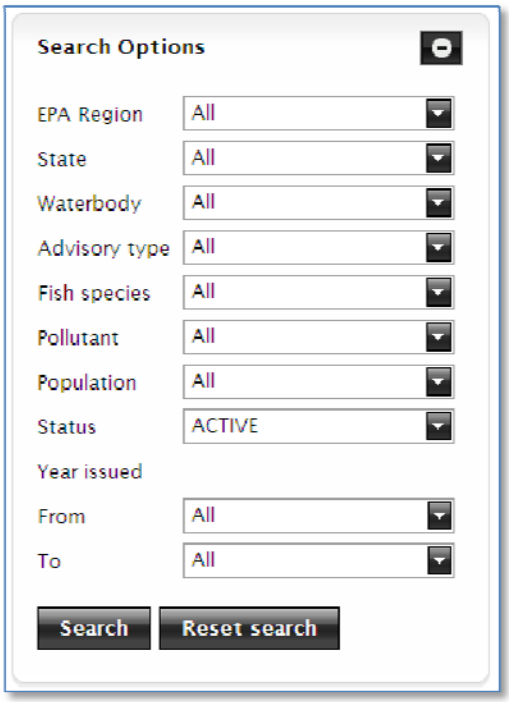


Figure 2. NLFA technical search options.

To conduct a search,

1) **Choose a location**. This can be a specific EPA Region, a State, or, if you leave the EPA Region and state set to "All," you can conduct a search of the entire United States.

2) **Choose advisory details**. You may conduct a search of one criterion, such as Fish Species or Pollutant, or you may build a precise search using multiple search criteria. Please see the Definition of Advisory Terms section of the Help document for more information on the search terms. Please note that only waterbodies with advisories will appear in the Waterbody search box. If you do not see a waterbody name that you are interested in, please visit the state website for more information.

3) **The search options will change** to display only the available criteria, based on other choices you have already made. For example, a user selects State = Alabama. All other search options are filtered to only show options available in Alabama. Next, the user chooses Waterbody = Coosa River. Again, all other search criteria are filtered to only display options related to the Coosa River. Next if Species = Largemouth bass, the only pollutant available to choose will be PCBs (Total). This means that there are no other pollutants listed in the advisory for Largemouth bass on the Coosa River in Alabama (Figure 3). If you wanted to search for a different pollutant, you would need to set your previous criteria back to "All" or click the "Reset Search" button and revise your input criteria.

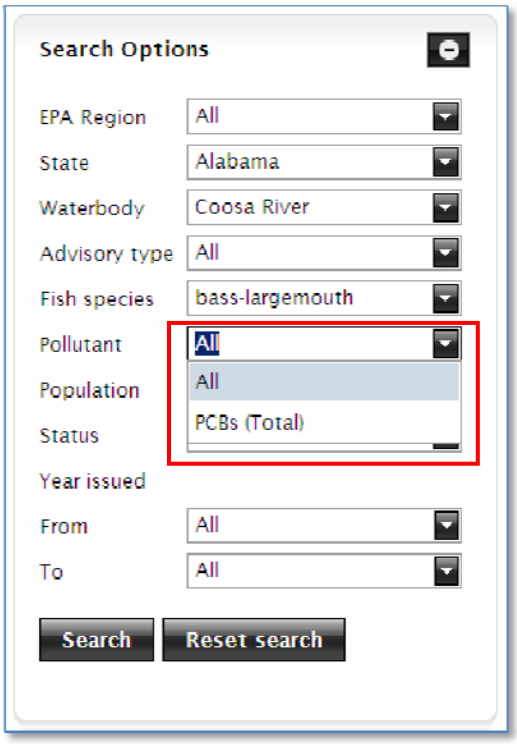


Figure 3. Example technical advisory search to demonstrate how criteria change based search options selected.

4) It may take a few seconds for the application to update the search options after you make each selection. While the application is updating, you will see the "***Loading…***" fish icon (Figure 4). Please wait for the updates to complete before selecting more search options.

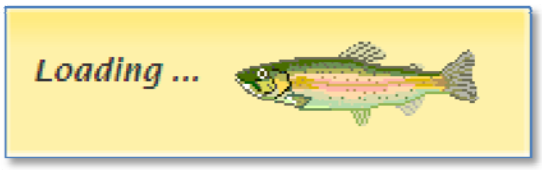


Figure 4. Data loading icon.

5) **Click the "Search" button** after selecting your criteria. To change your criteria, click "Reset search" to clear the options and start over.

3.0 SEARCH RESULTS: MAP TAB

1) **The Map tab will be visible by default** when you first conduct your search. After you click the "Search" button, the results of your search will be displayed on the map, and it will automatically zoom into the location of the selected advisories. The advisories that match your search criteria will be highlighted in bright blue. For your reference, the search criteria are written across the top of the map. In this example, the user has chosen to view all active River advisories in Alabama for Largemouth bass (Figure 5).

   Please note: You may click on the "Report" tab in the upper left of the map window to view your results in table format at any time. Please refer to Search Results: Report Tab *for instructions on using that view.*

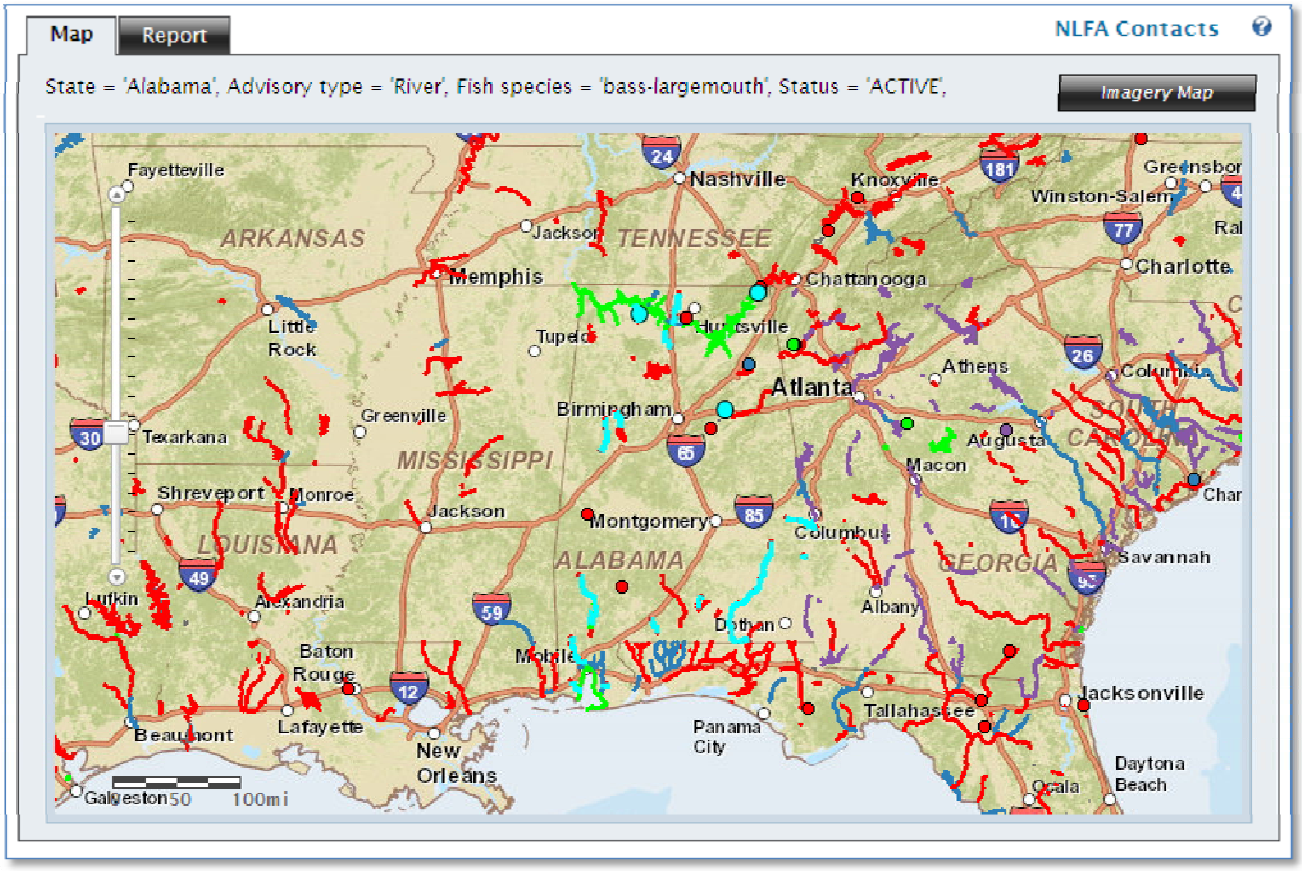


Figure 5. Map results of technical advisory search.

2) **Too much data to display**: If you receive this message box instead of a map (Figure 6), your search criteria selected too many advisories to be mapped at one time. Click "OK" and either view your results in table format by clicking on the "Report" tab, or limit the results by refining your search until the map can be displayed.

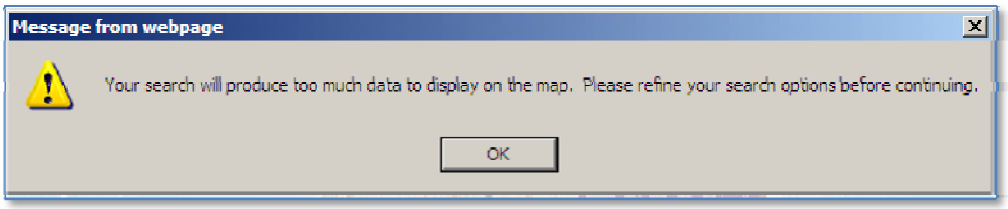


Figure 6. NLFA technical search error message.

3) **For tips on navigating the map**, please refer to Navigating the Map.

4) **Advisory colors are defined in the Legend**. For more information please refer to Map Legend.

5) **Click on an advisory** for more detailed information. The selected advisory will turn orange and a Fish Advisory Information box will pop up. You may click on any advisory for more information, even if it is not one that matched your original search criteria.

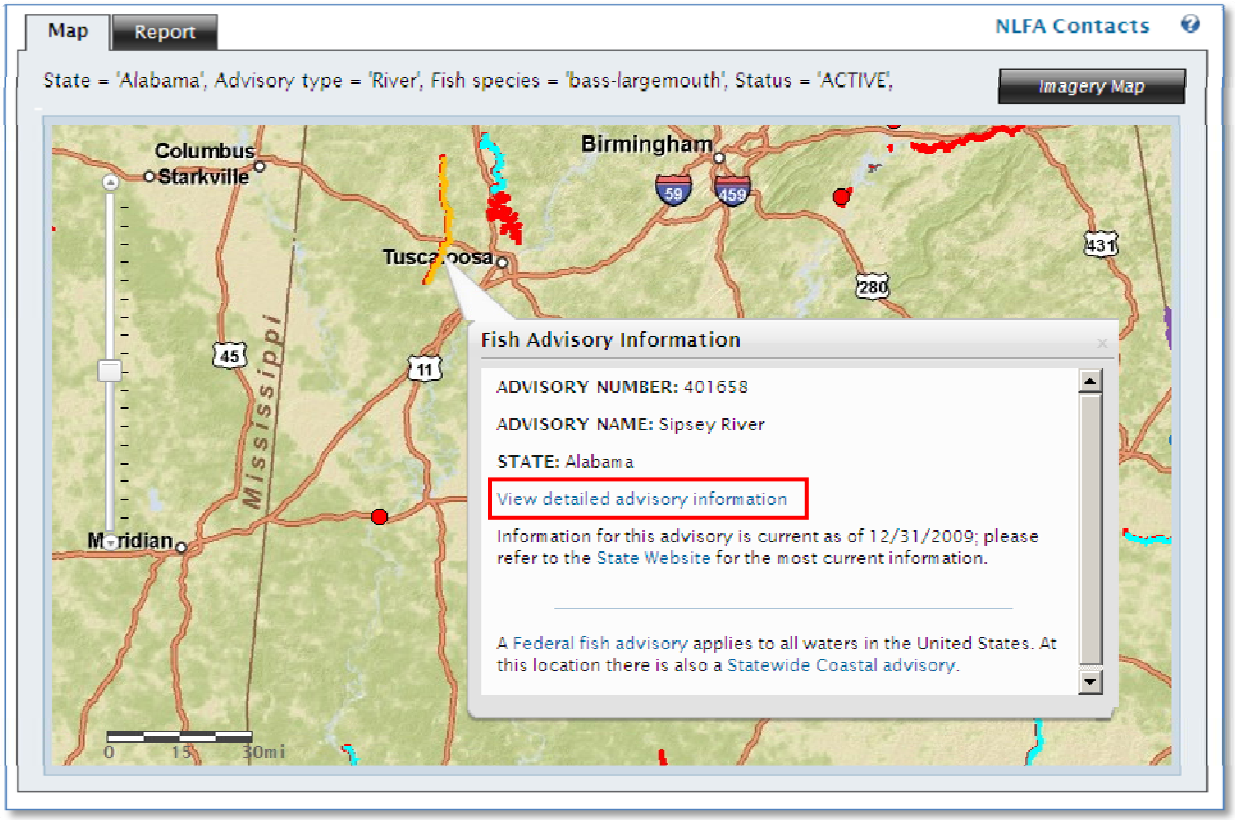
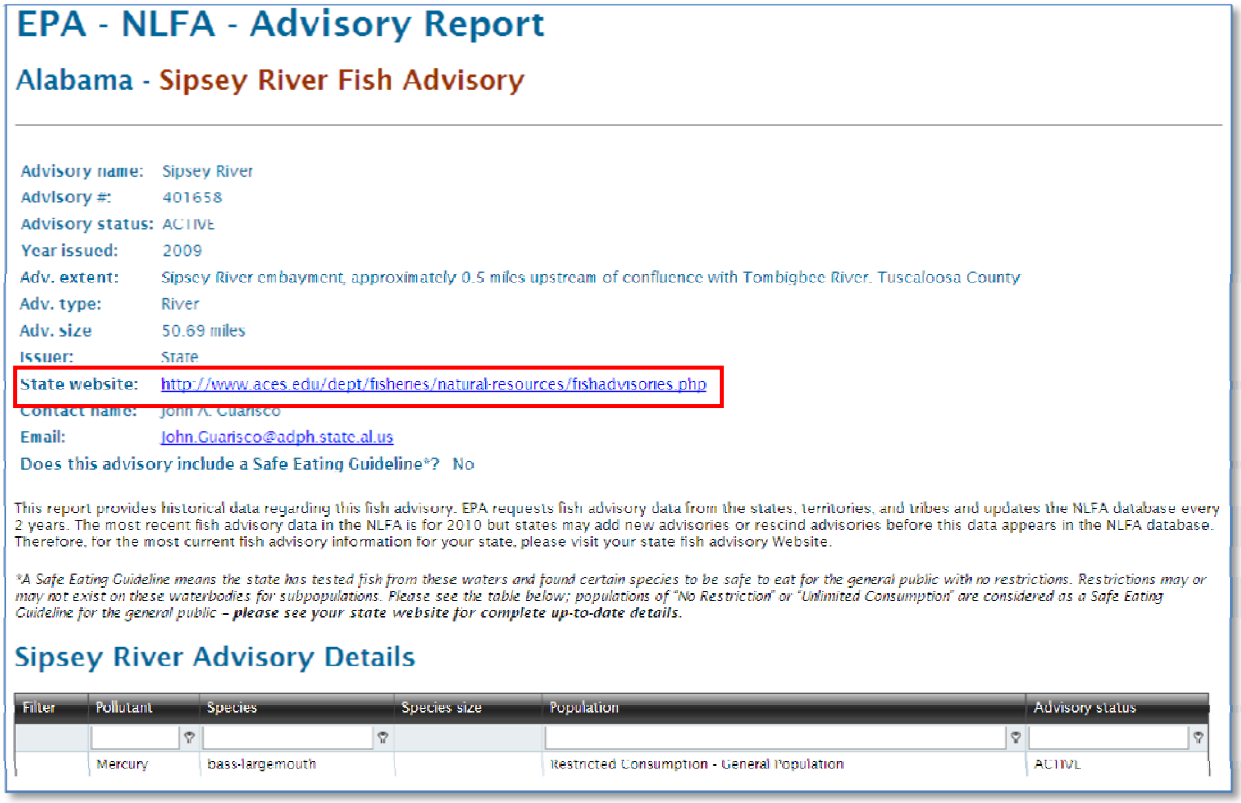


Figure 7. Map search results with fish advisory information box.

6) **View detailed advisory information** by clicking on the link in the Fish Advisory Information box (Figure 7). Clicking on that link will open a new window with detailed information on the advisory, and a link to the state's website for more recent information (Figure 8).



EPA - NLFA - Advisory Report

Alabama - Sipsey River Fish Advisory

Advisory name: Sipsey River
Advisory #: 401658
Advisory status: ACTIVE
Year issued: 2009
Adv. extent: Sipsey River embayment, approximately 0.5 miles upstream of confluence with Tombigbee River, Tuscaloosa County
Adv. type: River
Adv. size 50.69 miles
Issuer: State
State website: http://www.aces.edu/dept/fisheries/natural-resources/fishadvisories.php
Contact name: John A. Guarisco
Email: John.Guarisco@adph.state.al.us
Does this advisory include a Safe Eating Guideline*? No

This report provides historical data regarding this fish advisory. EPA requests fish advisory data from the states, territories, and tribes and updates the NLFA database every 2 years. The most recent fish advisory data in the NLFA is for 2010 but states may add new advisories or rescind advisories before this data appears in the NLFA database. Therefore, for the most current fish advisory information for your state, please visit your state fish advisory Website.

A Safe Eating Guideline means the state has tested fish from these waters and found certain species to be safe to eat for the general public with no restrictions. Restrictions may or may not exist on these waterbodies for subpopulations. Please see the table below; populations of "No Restriction" or "Unlimited Consumption" are considered as a Safe Eating Guideline for the general public – **please see your state website for complete up-to-date details.*

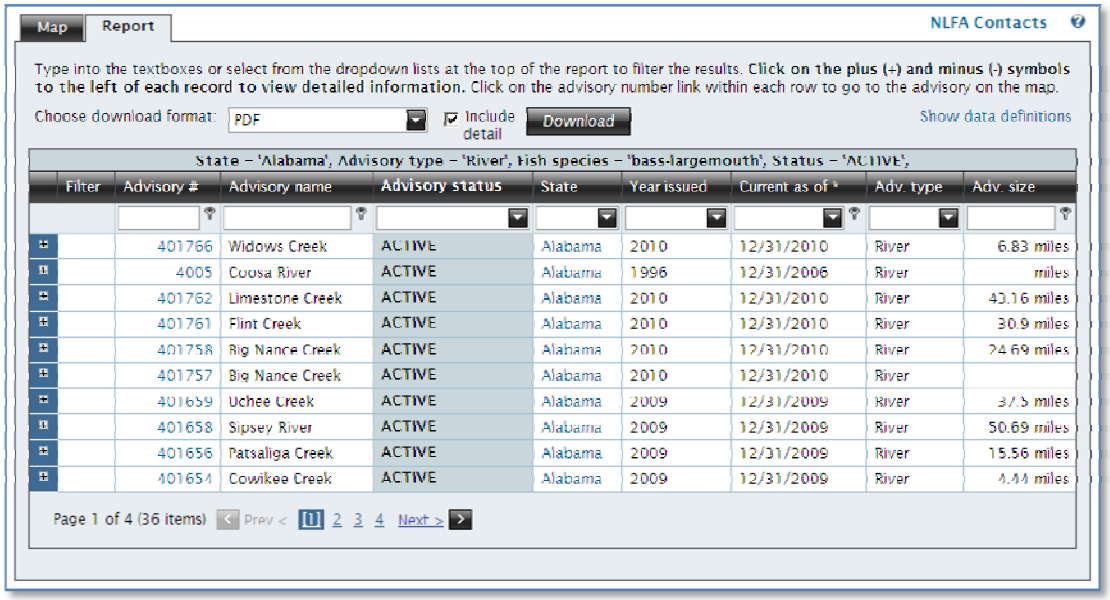
Sipsey River Advisory Details

Filter	Pollutant	Species	Species size	Population	Advisory status
	Mercury	bass-largemouth		Restricted Consumption - General Population	ACTIVE

Figure 8. Detailed advisory information report.

4.0 SEARCH RESULTS: REPORT TAB

1) **Click on the "Report" tab** in the upper left of the map window (Figure 9). The Report view will allow you to filter and sort your results and then download them in PDF or spreadsheet format.



Map | Report | NLFA Contacts

Type into the textboxes or select from the dropdown lists at the top of the report to filter the results. Click on the plus (+) and minus (-) symbols to the left of each record to view detailed information. Click on the advisory number link within each row to go to the advisory on the map.

Choose download format: PDF | Include detail | Download | Show data definitions

State = 'Alabama', Advisory type = 'River', Fish species = 'bass-largemouth', Status = 'ACTIVE',

Filter	Advisory #	Advisory name	Advisory status	State	Year issued	Current as of *	Adv. type	Adv. size
	401766	Widows Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	2010	12/31/2010	River	6.83 miles
	4005	Coosa River	ACTIVE	Alabama	1996	12/31/2006	River	miles
	401762	Limestone Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	2010	12/31/2010	River	43.16 miles
	401761	Flint Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	2010	12/31/2010	River	30.9 miles
	401758	Big Nance Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	2010	12/31/2010	River	24.69 miles
	401757	Big Nance Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	2010	12/31/2010	River	
	401659	Uchee Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	2009	12/31/2009	River	37.5 miles
	401658	Sipsey River	ACTIVE	Alabama	2009	12/31/2009	River	50.69 miles
	401656	Patsaliga Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	2009	12/31/2009	River	15.56 miles
	401654	Cowikee Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	2009	12/31/2009	River	4.44 miles

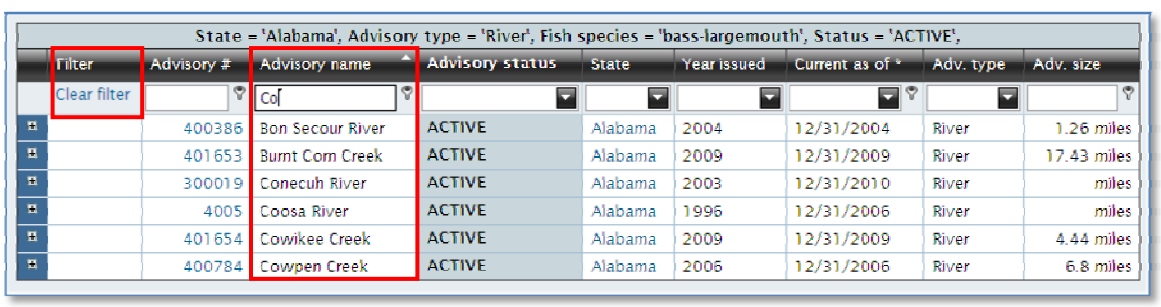
Page 1 of 4 (36 items) Prev < 1 2 3 4 Next >

Figure 9. NLFA technical search report tab.

2) The table will show all of the advisories that match your search terms printed across the top of the report for your reference. In this example, the user has chosen to view all active River advisories in Alabama for Largemouth bass.

3) **To sort your results**, click on the header of the column you wish to sort the results by. Click the same header again to sort in the reverse order.

4) **To filter your results**, type into the text box or select from the dropdown list at the top of the column you wish to use to filter (Figure 10). In the following example, the user wants to filter the results to show only the Conecuh River. The application will begin filtering as soon as you begin typing. Note that the filter will pull all advisory names with that letter string somewhere within the name, which is helpful when you are not sure how the waterbody name has been listed in the NLFA. To clear the filter, click "Clear filter" in the leftmost column of the table.



State = 'Alabama', Advisory type = 'River', Fish species = 'bass-largemouth', Status = 'ACTIVE',

Filter	Advisory #	Advisory name	Advisory status	State	Year issued	Current as of *	Adv. type	Adv. size
Clear filter		Co						
	400386	Bon Secour River	ACTIVE	Alabama	2004	12/31/2004	River	1.26 miles
	401653	Burnt Corn Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	2009	12/31/2009	River	17.43 miles
	300019	Conecuh River	ACTIVE	Alabama	2003	12/31/2010	River	miles
	4005	Coosa River	ACTIVE	Alabama	1996	12/31/2006	River	miles
	401654	Cowikee Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	2009	12/31/2009	River	4.44 miles
	400784	Cowpen Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	2006	12/31/2006	River	6.8 miles

Figure 10. Filtering fish tissue data results.

5) **To see more information about a specific advisory**, click the blue plus (+) and minus (-) symbols to the left of the advisory record. The record you chose will expand to show all of the details available for that advisory (Figure 11). Refer to Definition of Advisory Terms for more information on the terms used in this view. Click on the link to the state website for the most up-to-date information on any advisory or contact the fish advisory program contact by email.

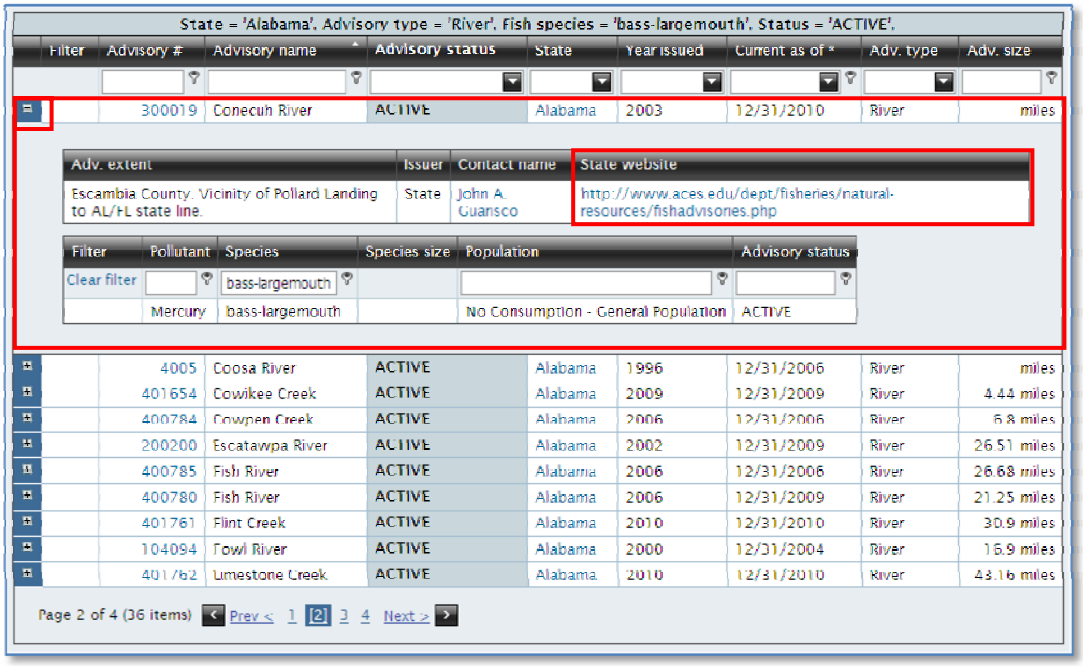


Figure 11. Detailed results for Advisory # 300019.

6) **To map an advisory**, click on the advisory number in the "Advisory #" column.

You may also click on the "Map" tab in the upper left of the map window to view all of your results displayed on a map at any time. Please refer to Search Results: Map Tab for instructions on using that view.

7) **To download your results**, choose the format of the download from the dropdown box. You may select .PDF, .XLS, or .XLSX (Figure 12). Then, check the "Include detail" box if you wish to include the details for each advisory. The details include the advisory extent description and pollutant, species, and population information.

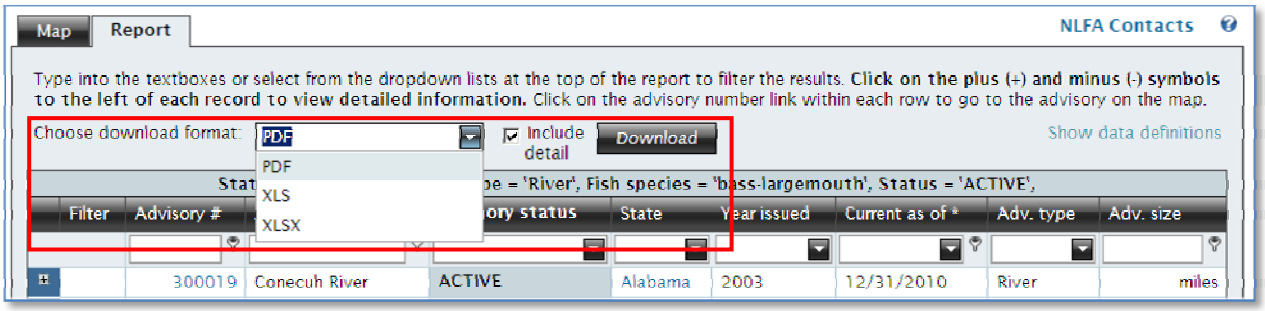
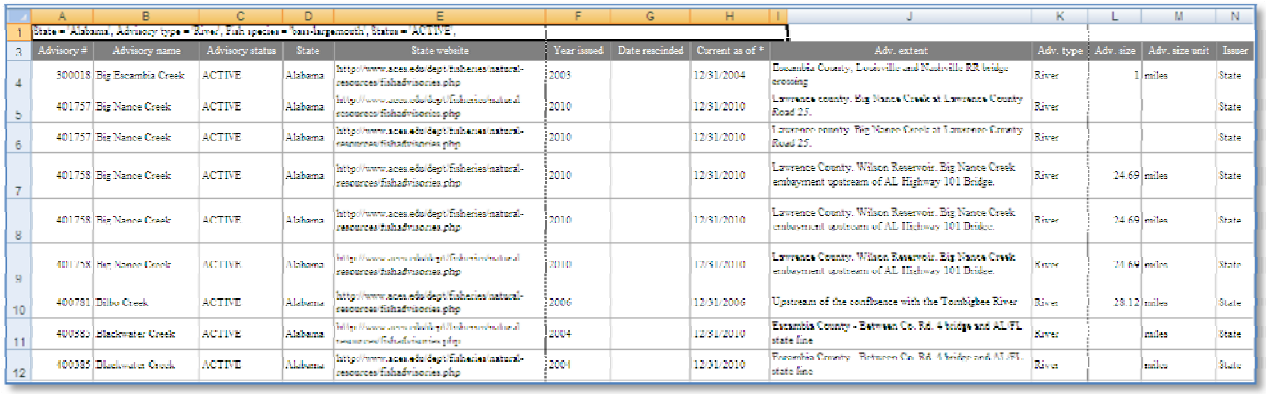


Figure 12. File format download options for technical advisory search results.

Then click “Download.” A pop-up box will ask you if you want to open or save the file. Save it to your computer or open and print your file as desired. Please note, when you choose to download an Excel file, the details will automatically be included (Figure 13).



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	State = 'Alabama', Advisory type = 'River', Fish species = 'bass-largemouth', Status = 'ACTIVE',													
3	Advisory #	Advisory name	Advisory status	State	State website	Year issued	Date rescinded	Current as of *		Adv. extent	Adv. type	Adv. size	Adv. size unit	Issuer
4	300018	Big Escambia Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	http://www.aces.edu/dept/fisheries/natural-resources/fishadvisories.php	2003		12/31/2004		Escambia County, Louisville and Nashville RR bridge crossing	River	1	miles	State
5	401757	Big Nance Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	http://www.aces.edu/dept/fisheries/natural-resources/fishadvisories.php	2010		12/31/2010		Lawrence county, Big Nance Creek at Lawrence County Road 25.	River			State
6	401757	Big Nance Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	http://www.aces.edu/dept/fisheries/natural-resources/fishadvisories.php	2010		12/31/2010		Lawrence county, Big Nance Creek at Lawrence County Road 25.	River			State
7	401758	Big Nance Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	http://www.aces.edu/dept/fisheries/natural-resources/fishadvisories.php	2010		12/31/2010		Lawrence County, Wilson Reservoir, Big Nance Creek embayment upstream of AL Highway 101 Bridge.	River	24.69	miles	State
8	401758	Big Nance Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	http://www.aces.edu/dept/fisheries/natural-resources/fishadvisories.php	2010		12/31/2010		Lawrence County, Wilson Reservoir, Big Nance Creek embayment upstream of AL Highway 101 Bridge.	River	24.69	miles	State
9	401758	Big Nance Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	http://www.aces.edu/dept/fisheries/natural-resources/fishadvisories.php	2010		12/31/2010		Lawrence County, Wilson Reservoir, Big Nance Creek embayment upstream of AL Highway 101 Bridge.	River	24.69	miles	State
10	400781	Dilbo Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	http://www.aces.edu/dept/fisheries/natural-resources/fishadvisories.php	2006		12/31/2006		Upstream of the confluence with the Tombigbee River	River	28.12	miles	State
11	400585	Blackwater Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	http://www.aces.edu/dept/fisheries/natural-resources/fishadvisories.php	2004		12/31/2010		Escambia County - Between Co. Rd. 4 bridge and AL/FL state line	River		miles	State
12	400585	Blackwater Creek	ACTIVE	Alabama	http://www.aces.edu/dept/fisheries/natural-resources/fishadvisories.php	2004		12/31/2010		Escambia County - Between Co. Rd. 4 bridge and AL/FL state line	River		miles	State

Figure 13. Downloaded fish advisory data with details in Excel.

5.0 FIND STATE FISH ADVISORY CONTACT INFORMATION

There are several ways to find the state fish advisory websites and fish advisory contact information.

1) **Click the link “NLFA Contacts”** in the upper right of the map view or report view.
2) **Click the link for the “State website”** from the Fish Advisory Information box that appears when you click on any advisory on the map.
3) **Click the state website link** from the table of results using the Report view. You must expand an advisory to see the details; the website link is in the field “State website.” To send an email to the state fish advisory contact, click on the name in the State Contact field.

6.0 NAVIGATING THE MAP

There are several ways that you can navigate around the map to look for waterbodies or advisories of interest. You may choose to use the mouse, keyboard, and/or slider for panning and zooming into the map (Figure 14).

Zoom In

- **Mouse Scroll Forward**: Roll the scroll button on your mouse forward to zoom in on the map.
- **SHIFT + Drag the mouse**: Holding down the SHIFT key while dragging the mouse will allow you to draw a box around the area you wish to zoom in to.
- **Double Click**: Double-clicking your mouse on the map will zoom in one level.
- **Slider**: The slider bar is located in the upper left corner of the map. Click the top of the slider bar to zoom in once, or click on the slider box and drag it upward to zoom in as many levels as necessary.

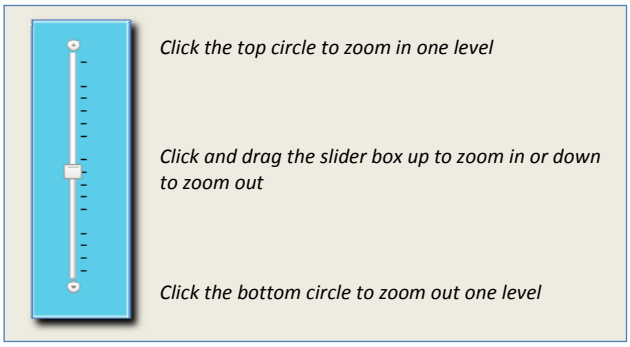


Figure 14. Ways to navigate the Technical Advisory search map.

Zoom Out

- **Mouse Scroll Backward**: Roll the scroll button on your mouse backward to zoom out on the map.
- **SHIFT + CTRL + Drag the mouse**: Holding down the SHIFT and CTRL keys while dragging the mouse will allow you to draw a box around the area you wish to zoom out of.
- **Slider**: The slider bar is located in the upper left corner of the map. Click the bottom of the slider bar to zoom out one level, or click on the slider box and drag it downward to zoom out as many levels as necessary.

Pan

- **Drag the mouse**: Choose a spot on the map and click and hold down the mouse button, while dragging the mouse. This allows you to pan across the map in any direction.
- **Use arrow keys**: Click inside the map once with your mouse and then use the arrow keys on your keyboard to pan the map up, down, left, or right.

Re-center the Map

- **SHIFT + Click**: Hold down the SHIFT button and click the mouse on the map. This will re-center the map to the location of your click.

7.0 MAP LEGEND

The map legend will always be to the left and down from the map (Figure 15). It will expand to show additional layers as they are added to the map. You may click on the checkboxes to show or hide the different layers of advisory information.

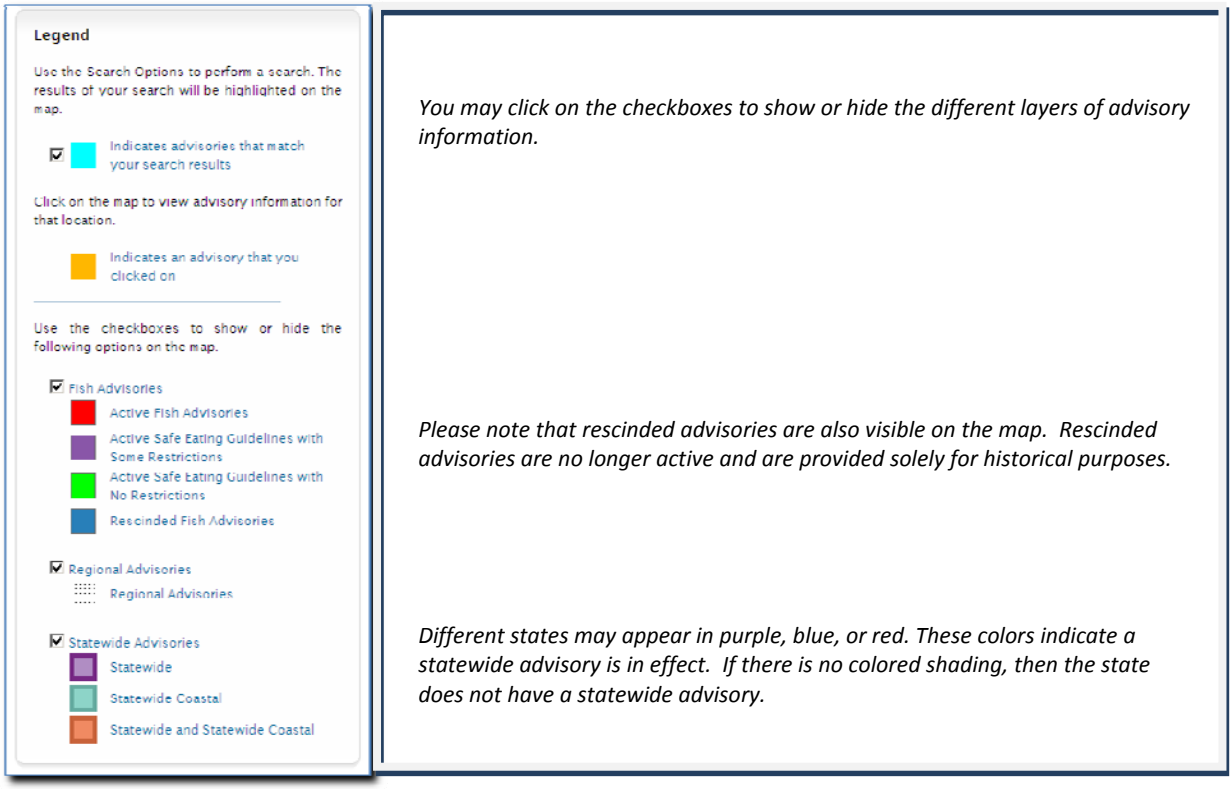


Figure 15. Technical fish advisory search legend.

8.0 HELP

The Help button (? symbol) is located above the upper right corner of the map or report (Figure 16). For Help in searching the technical website, click the ? button at any time to bring up this Help document.

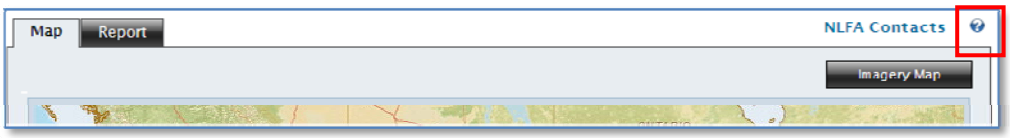


Figure 16. NLFA technical search HELP icon.

9.0 DEFINITION OF ADVISORY TERMS

Fish Consumption Advisory is not a regulation, but rather a voluntary recommendation issued to help protect public health. Consumption advisories may include recommendations to limit or avoid eating certain fish and water-dependent wildlife species caught from specific water bodies or, in some cases, from specific water-body types (e.g., all lakes) due to contamination by one or more chemical contaminants. An advisory may be issued for

the general population (i.e., general public), including recreational and subsistence fishers, or it may be issued specifically for sensitive populations, such as pregnant women, nursing mothers, and children.

Advisory extent is a description of the extent of the advisory within or along the waterbody.

Advisory name is the name of the waterbody on which the advisory has been placed.

Advisory number is a unique ID code for each advisory used only by the EPA to track changes in advisories over time.

Advisory size is the size of the area affected by the advisory. The size units depend on the type of waterbody and are noted in the Advisory Report (for example, rivers are measured in linear miles and lakes are measured in acres, while coastlines are measured in linear miles and estuaries are measured in square miles). Size values are provided by the issuer of the advisory or, if not available, values are calculated.

Advisory status is defined as either Active or Rescinded. An active advisory is an advisory that is in effect as of the date given. A rescinded advisory is an advisory that is no longer in effect and information provided in the NLFA is solely for historical purposes.

Advisory type is the type of waterbody affected by the advisory (for example, lake, river, estuary, or coast). The advisory type also denotes whether the advisory covers a single waterbody or all waterbodies in a specific state (statewide) or region of the state (regionwide).

- Regional - Advisory includes all waterbodies in a designated region, for instance the Mississippi Delta region.
- Statewide - Advisory includes all waterbodies of a specific type (i.e., rivers and/or lakes) in a state.
- Multi-class - An advisory that includes more than one type of waterbody, for instance all the ponds, streams, and canals in a wildlife refuge. This type of advisory is not common.

Issuer - The government entity issuing the advisory, usually a State, Tribe, or Territory.

Pollutant – The chemical contaminant(s) that triggered the fish consumption advisory. The NLFA contains information on advisories issued for 33 different pollutants, but 98 percent of all advisories active in 2010 involved the following five bioaccumulative chemical contaminants: mercury, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), chlordane, dioxins, and dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane (DDT).

- Mercury - Mercury is a naturally occurring element that is found in air, water and soil. Nearly all fish and shellfish contain traces of mercury. For most people, the risk from mercury by eating fish and shellfish is not a health concern. Yet, some fish contain higher levels of mercury that may harm an unborn baby or young child's developing nervous system. The risks from mercury in fish depend on the amount of fish eaten and the levels of mercury in the fish.
- PCB - Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are synthetic chemicals that were manufactured for use in various industrial and commercial applications, including oil in electrical and hydraulic equipment, and plasticizers in paints, plastics and rubber products. PCB production was banned in the United States in 1979, although use of the chemicals is still allowed in closed systems such as transformers and capacitors.
- Chlordane - A pesticide that was banned in the United States in 1988, chlordane continues to degrade in the environment, and advisories for chlordane have decreased in size over the past decade.
- Dioxins -The term "dioxin" is commonly used to refer to a family of toxic chemicals that share a similar chemical structure. Dioxins are by-products of various industrial processes (i.e., bleaching

paper pulp, and chemical and pesticide manufacture) and combustion activities (i.e., burning household trash, forest fires, and waste incineration). Dioxin levels in the environment have been declining since the early seventies, and the size of waters under fish advisory for dioxin has likewise been decreasing over the past several years.

- DDT - Dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane (DDT) was developed as the first of the modern synthetic insecticides in the 1940s. DDT was banned in the United States in 1975 due to adverse effects to wildlife and potential human health risks.

Population – The group of people being advised as to how much fish they should consume. The NLFA includes information on advisories issued for the following populations:

- General population includes recreational and subsistence fishers but excludes sensitive subpopulations such as pregnant women, nursing mothers, children, and women of childbearing age.
- Subpopulations are defined by the issuer of the advisory and may be different in each state. Common subpopulations may include pregnant women, children, women of childbearing age, nursing mothers, and/or subsistence fishers.
- Safe Eating Guidelines are recommendations issued by the states to advise the public of fish species that are safe to eat because they contain low levels of contamination. The guidelines vary by state and do not mean that an unlimited amount of fish should be consumed. Restrictions may or may not exist on these waterbodies for subpopulations – please see the state website for details.
- Other restriction- includes commercial fishing bans, public fishing bans, and informational health advisories. This type of advisory is usually uncommon.