

DO NOT EAT WILD SHELLFISH FROM THE TAMAR RIVER ESTUARY



LIMIT FISH SERVINGS FROM THE TAMAR RIVER ESTUARY TO 2-3 SERVES PER WEEK



About the TEER Program

The TEER Program fosters collaborative partnerships and works closely with a range of industry, community, government, research and business partners to monitor and report on ecosystem health as well as coordinating activities to reduce pollutants entering waterways.

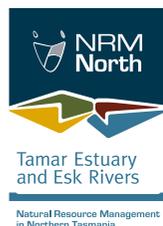
Our aim is to improve our scientific understanding of the issues impacting upon the health of the TEER waterways so that we can better identify and target priority areas requiring investment in on-ground works.

For more information:

Food Safety
www.foodstandards.gov.au

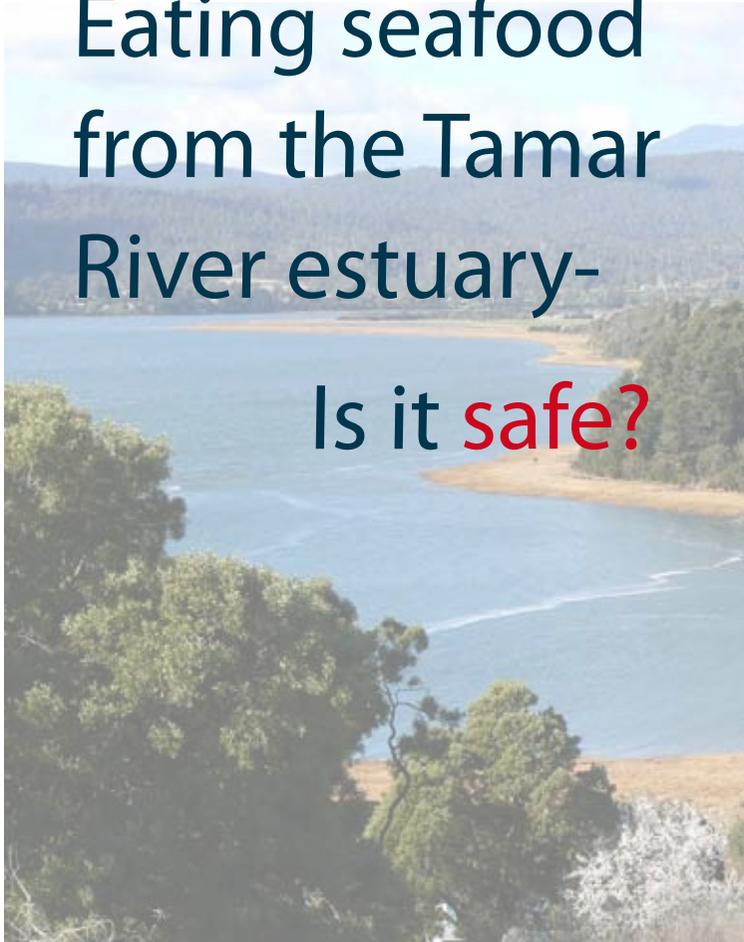
Public Health
www.publichealthalerts.tas.gov.au
Phone: 1800 671 738

TEER Program
www.nrmnorth.org.au/teer



Published June 2012

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Eating seafood from the Tamar River estuary-

Is it safe?

Seafood and your health

Seafood is highly nutritious and essential to a balanced diet however, some species of seafood in urban areas can accumulate contaminants such as metals, and therefore may not be fit for consumption, or may only be safe when consumed in limited quantities.



Contaminated Pacific oyster taken from underneath Batman Bridge, Tamar River estuary, Tasmania.

Oysters

Approximately 300 oysters from the Tamar estuary were analysed for metal contaminants.

Concentrations of cadmium exceeded the limits in the upper estuary whilst zinc and copper were up to 4 times the levels set by the Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ). Wild pacific oysters are not safe to eat from the Tamar River estuary.



A commercially harvested Pacific oyster (left) and a Pacific oyster from the Tamar River estuary (right), are visibly different.

Fish

Metal levels in the fish species tested were found to be within the FSANZ guidelines and not of concern to public health.



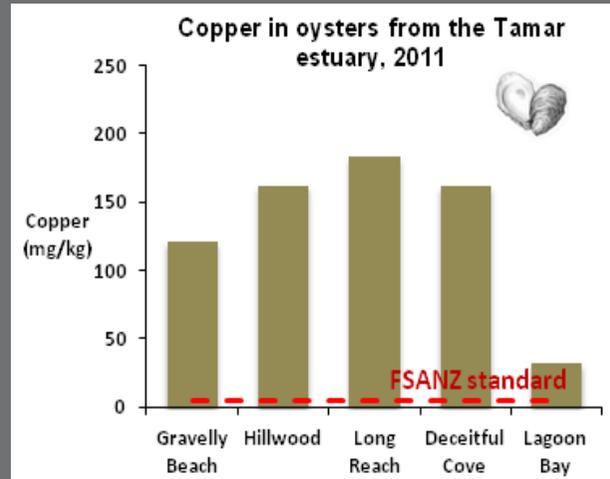
When considering eating fish from the Tamar estuary, the public should follow the same advice provided by the FSANZ for all non-pelagic fish – it is recommended consumption be limited to 2-3 serves per week.

The problem

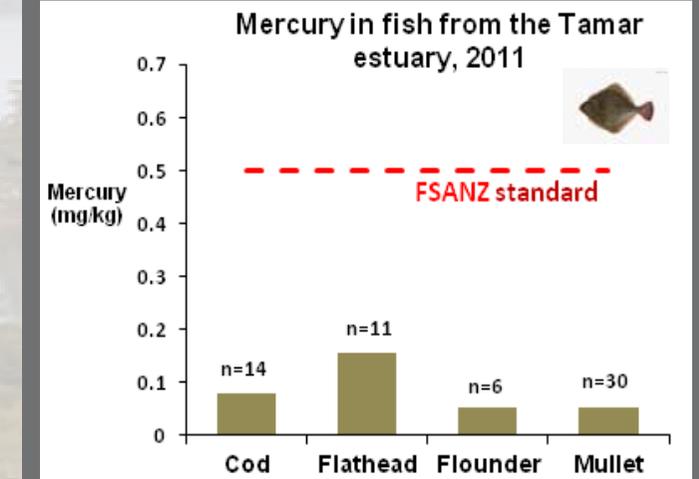
There is a long standing recommendation from the Department of Health and Human Services against consuming wild shellfish from the Tamar estuary. This advice stems from both heavy metal accumulation, and the microbial risks from these filter feeders. Despite this advice, recreational users of the estuary, tourists and the general public are still harvesting shellfish from the Tamar estuary.

The TEER study

In 2011, NRM North's Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers (TEER) program investigated metal concentrations in the Pacific oyster and four species of recreationally targeted fish; cod, flathead, flounder and mullet.



Mean copper concentrations in oysters from the Tamar River estuary, northern Tasmania, exceed guideline values in this study.



Mean mercury concentrations in fish from the Tamar River estuary, northern Tasmania, are found to be within guideline values in this study.