

How are PCBs impacting wildlife and the ecosystem?

The short and long-term effects of PCBs on Lake Crabtree's wildlife are still unknown.

Here is what we do know:

Lake Crabtree's wildlife has been exposed to PCBs from sediment and from eating contaminated prey.

Lake Crabtree has one nesting pair of Bald Eagles, a nest rookery for Great Blue Herons, and many other fish and aquatic organisms dependent on food that could be contaminated by PCBs.

A North Carolina State University study found PCBs had an impact on Asiatic clams in Brier Creek, upstream of Lake Crabtree.

PCBs can cause the following problems in wildlife:

- Low birth weight in offspring
- Harmful effects to unborn offspring
- Skin Effects
- Liver Damage

What are the risks associated with recreational activities at Lake Crabtree?

Scientific research and current samples tell us that there is a very low cancer risk due to contact with PCBs from soil, water and sediment at Lake Crabtree. The PCB levels found in samples taken so far are within acceptable limits set by the EPA and NCDHHS.

Only a few samples have been taken from Lake Crabtree. The PCB Task Force asked the EPA to take more samples. At this time, the EPA is testing soil, sediment, and water samples to better understand any possible health risks to people who use the park.

Based on the scientific information we have right now, there is no significant health risk for boating, wading, or catch and release fishing.

Swimming is not allowed in Lake Crabtree

You MAY NOT take fish from Lake Crabtree or Crabtree Creek, just below the lake.

You MAY catch and release fish.

How can you find out more information and get involved?

- For a list of State fish advisories
www.epi.state.nc.us/epifish/current.html
 - For a list of fish that are safe to eat go to
www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/fish/safefish.html
 - For EPA Superfund information:
www.epa.gov/superfund
 - Request to be placed on the EPA's Ward Transformer Superfund mailing list:
Call Community Involvement Coordinator
Angela Miller at 1-800-435-9234
- Join a stream watch group, such as:
The Umstead Coalition: www.umsteadcoalition.org
The Neuse River Foundation: www.neuseriver.org

**Call Lake Crabtree County Park at:
(919) 460-3390**

www.wakegov.com



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LAKE CRABTREE AND PCBs:

What you should know.

**SUMMER
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What exactly are PCBs?

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are a group of man-made chemicals that were once used in making electrical equipment. In 1977 the U.S. stopped making PCBs because there was evidence that they build up in the environment and can be harmful to people's health.

What happens to PCBs in the environment?

PCBs entered the air, water and soil

- When they were made
- When they were used
- When they were disposed of
- From spills and leaks when they were transported, and
- From leaks or fires in products containing PCBs.

PCBs may stay in the environment for a long time because they do not break down easily. In water, a small amount of PCBs may stay dissolved, but most bind to the sediment at the bottom of lakes, rivers, and streams. Small organisms eat this sediment containing PCBs and then larger animals, such as fish and mammals, eat these organisms. Bottom feeders, such as catfish, can have high levels of PCBs in their bodies. These levels can build up in the fish until they are thousands of times higher than levels found in the water or sediment. This can make the fish unsafe to eat.

You are NOT permitted to take fish from Lake Crabtree or Crabtree Creek, just below the lake.

You may catch and release fish.

How did PCBs get into Brier Creek Reservoir, Lake Crabtree and other local waters?

The Ward Transformer Company is an electrical transformer factory built in 1964 that is located northwest of the Raleigh-Durham International Airport. A small stream is located near the Ward Transformer Company that leads to Little Brier Creek, Brier Creek Reservoir, Brier Creek, Lake Crabtree, and Crabtree Creek. Before 1972, storm water runoff from the Ward Transformer Company was not controlled, and the water bodies nearby began to get contaminated with PCBs.

In 1997 the State of North Carolina Superfund Section collected samples and PCBs were found in sediment collected from the stream near the Ward Transformer Company. PCBs were also found in Little Brier Creek, less than a mile downstream from the site.

In April 2003, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) put the Ward Transformer Company site on the National Priorities List of known releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants throughout the United States and its territories. It is now part of the EPA's Superfund Investigation, and the Ward facility is scheduled to be cleaned up this summer. This will remove the known major source of contamination. At this time Ward Transformer Company reconditions only old transformers that are PCB-free.

Why did Wake County announce a policy of catch and release fishing at Lake Crabtree?

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) has issued the following advisories:

- December 2003
Little Brier Creek / Brier Cr. Reservoir:
Do not eat any fish.
- May 2004
Brier Creek:
Do not eat any fish.
Lake Crabtree:
Do not eat any carp or catfish. All other fish may be eaten at the rate of only one meal per month.
- July 2005 & March 2006
Crabtree Creek:
Eat only one meal per month of carp, catfish, and largemouth bass.

These advisories warned that eating more fish than advised could lead to health problems, including a higher risk of cancer, infections, skin problems, and learning problems in children born to women who eat fish from these waters.

A local government Task Force was concerned that many people were still taking home and eating more fish than the State advised as being safe. In November 2005 Wake County Government adopted a policy of "catch and release only" fishing for Lake Crabtree and Crabtree Creek, just below the lake. There are plenty of fish to be caught safely; the County is simply asking people to return the fish to the water (release them).

You may only catch and release fish.