

# Safely Harvesting Whitefish and Walleye



The Ojibwe have always lived on and around waters abundant with fish. Since the earliest days, fish has been an essential component of the Ojibwe diet providing protein, omega-3s, and at times vitamin D from fish livers.

Over time, chemicals from human activities have been documented in fish species all around the world, including those in Ceded Territory. Samples from walleye and Lake Superior whitefish have undergone rigorous laboratory testing to ensure these fish meet Food and Drug Administration chemical contaminant safety standards. Below are some steps you can take to continue to reduce consumption of these chemicals in walleye and Lake Superior whitefish.

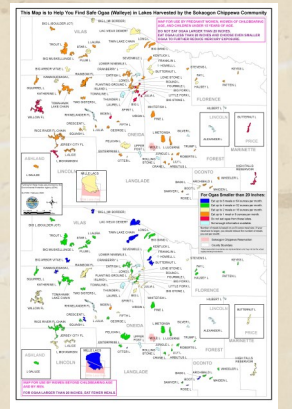
## Chemicals of Concern:

**Dioxin, Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), and Toxaphene** are chemicals which result from human activity. These chemicals are linked to cancer in animals and dioxin is known to cause cancer in humans. Fortunately, laboratory results show Lake Superior Whitefish are well below dangerous levels for these chemicals. Find out more at [www.GLIFWC.org/lakesuperiorwhitefish/](http://www.GLIFWC.org/lakesuperiorwhitefish/)

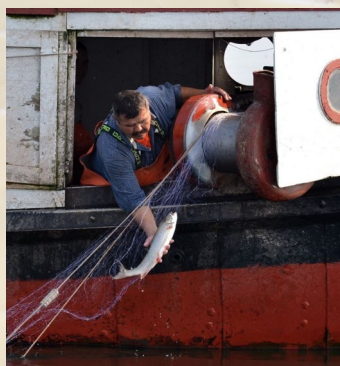
**Methylmercury (mercury)** is a chemical which has both natural and human sources. Laboratory results show mercury concentrations are relatively low in Lake Superior fish while inland waters have higher concentrations which can end up in walleye.

## Before Harvest:

**Select Appropriate Harvesting Sites:** Avoid areas recently impacted by large water events, such as flooding, which can increase pathogens. Select lakes with the lowest mercury content in your fishing area. Use GLIFWC's Mercury Maps to choose the inland lakes with the lowest amount of mercury. Learn more at: [www.GLIFWC.org/Mercury](http://www.GLIFWC.org/Mercury).



## During Harvest:



**Low or Small, Healthy for All:** Fish lower on the food chain are generally lower in contaminants. For fish at the top of the food chain, such as walleye, it is a good practice to harvest smaller fish, which generally have lower amounts of contaminants.

**Mercury is stored in the meat of fish and cannot be cooked out.**

## After Harvest:

**Lake Superior Fish – Grill, Skin, or Trim:** Chemicals such as PCBs and Dioxins, are stored in the fat of the fish. Trimming fat and removing the skin will help reduce these chemicals. Also, cooking in a way which allows the fat to drain away, such as grilling, will help reduce these chemicals as well.

