

Fact Sheet

Fishing in and around Port Pirie

Some marine animals in and around Port Pirie, such as fish, crabs, mussels and razorfish contain high levels of heavy metals. The levels of lead and cadmium metals in some species caught in some areas were high enough to be harmful and they are not safe to eat.






In 2020, sand from the bottom of the Port Pirie River, creeks and Germein Bay was tested to check levels of heavy metals. Levels of some metals were high, particularly in areas closest to the smelter.

Marine animals living in these waters were tested and all contained some metals. Some species in some areas had high levels of lead and cadmium that could be harmful to people when eaten.

The [summary table](#) below outlines the affected marine animals and health recommendations.

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVICE: Eating recreationally-caught seafood in Port Pirie

This advice relates to recreational fishing and does **NOT** apply to commercial fishing outside of these areas

SEAFOOD TYPE	LOCATION	Young children aged under 5 years AND people who are pregnant or planning pregnancy	Non-pregnant adults AND children aged 5 years and above
RAZORFISH 	ZONE 1 (southern) ZONE 2 (northern)	DO NOT EAT	DO NOT EAT
	Barrow Beach	DO NOT EAT	CAUTION minimise & monitor
MUSSELS 	ZONE 1 (southern)	DO NOT EAT	DO NOT EAT
	ZONE 2 (northern)	DO NOT EAT	CAUTION minimise & monitor
CRABS 	ZONE 1 (southern)	DO NOT EAT	DO NOT EAT
	ZONE 2 (northern)	DO NOT EAT	CAUTION minimise & monitor
FINFISH 	ZONE 1 (southern) ZONE 2 (northern)	DO NOT EAT	CAUTION minimise & monitor
Species not surveyed in 2020 e.g. octopus and squid 	ZONE 1 (southern) ZONE 2 (northern)	DO NOT EAT	CAUTION minimise & monitor

Public health advice issued by the Chief Public Health Officer Professor Nicola Spurrier



PIRSA recreational fishing restrictions

There are recreational fishing restrictions in and around Port Pirie due to the high levels of lead and cadmium in some marine animals.

The [designated locations of the fishing closure](#) are:

- > **Zone 1:** south and west of the Weeroona Island Boat Ramp including First Creek, Second Creek and the Port Pirie River
- > **Zone 2:** Port Germein area extending north and west of the Weeroona Island Boat Ramp

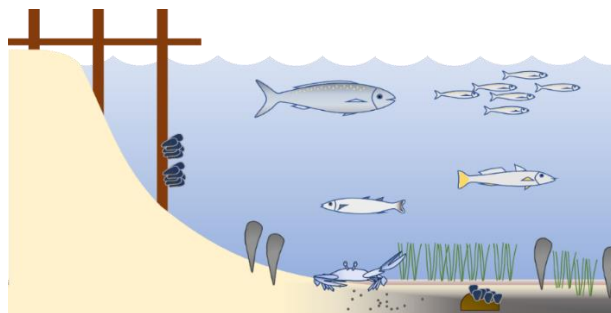
Follow the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) [Port Pirie fishing closure notice](#) directions.

Marine animal testing

Marine animals that were tested live and feed at different depths of the river, creeks and bay. Those that spend most time feeding or buried in the sand have the most contact with the metals, including crabs, mussels and razorfish. These metals can end up in the edible parts of the marine animal and be eaten by people.

Crabs and mussels caught in the First Creek and harbour area, and razorfish in all designated areas have the highest health risk when eaten.

Where marine animals live and feed



Results of marine animal testing in Port Pirie waters



Health advice

Exposure to high levels of lead and cadmium metals can damage body organs and affect kidney, brain and nerve functions.

Precautions

People fishing in these waters should take important precautions to reduce their risk of metal exposure. This advice does not apply to commercial fishing outside of the designated locations.

- > **No one** should eat crabs and mussels from Zone 1 or razorfish taken from Zone 1 or Zone 2 because they have high levels of lead and cadmium.
- > **Children under 5 years old and pregnant people** should not eat any seafood caught in Zone 1, Zone 2 or Barrow Beach (including species such as squid and octopus that have not been tested yet) because it contains high levels of lead and cadmium that are harmful to the developing brain and nervous system of unborn babies and young children.
- > **All other people** should be aware that seafood in the designated areas contain some level of metals, which can be avoided by eating commercially produced seafood.
 - Some people are at greater risk from eating this seafood and need to be more careful, including:
 - People who work in jobs where they have contact with lead and cadmium.
 - People who have some health conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney disease, heart disease or bone disease.
 - For people with these risk factors it is recommended that they:
 - have regular blood lead tests if they eat fish caught in Zone 1 more than twice a week or eat razorfish from Barrow Beach more than once a week.
 - avoid or reduce how much they eat of fish, crabs and mussels from Zone 2, including species such as squid and octopus that haven't been tested yet.

Cooking does not remove lead or cadmium from seafood and may transfer metals from shells and fish bones to the edible meat.

More information

For more information, visit www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/portpiriefishing.

For more information

Scientific Services
Health Protection and Licensing Services
Department for Health and Wellbeing
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www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

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