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Georgia EPD Lifts Swim Advisory for Ogeechee River

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) announced today a decision to lift a swimming advisory for the Ogeechee River based on laboratory testing of river water samples taken by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A fish consumption advisory for the river will remain pending results of fish tissue analysis.

An advisory recommending people not swim in the river was posted last weekend after dead fish began appearing in the river in Screven and Bulloch counties. The advisory also applied to citizens in Bryan, Chatham and Effingham counties as more dead fish were found downstream.

“Based on the EPA data, we are confident the swim advisory is no longer appropriate,” said Jim Ussery, Assistant EPD Director. “The EPA analysis did not detect any chemical substances in the water at unsafe levels.”

The water samples were taken from the river at three locations in Screven County and at a fourth location where highway 119 crosses the river between Bulloch and Effingham counties.

EPD has already announced that the fish died of Columnaris, a bacterial disease caused by environmental stress. EPD will continue work to determine the cause of that environmental stress. Columnaris is not known to affect humans, but citizens with health questions should contact their personal physicians.

Further laboratory test results are not expected over the holiday weekend.

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