
Mercury Rising in Coastal Women

Hurricanes aren't the only peril of seaside living. Recent EPA analysis has determined that coast-dwelling women have twice the amount of mercury in their blood than their inland counterparts.

Why? Coastal women tend to consume more seafood, and years of pollution from coal-burning plants and waste incinerators have contaminated the aquatic food chain, leading to a fish population chock full of nasties like nitrates and Red No. 3. In an effort to curb mercury consumption, environmental nonprofits Oceana and the Natural Resources Defense Council are lobbying supermarkets to post warnings on the types of fish that are highest in the neurotoxin. Besides limiting your intake of predator fish like tuna and swordfish, you can help limit marine contamination by disposing of mercury-laden thermometers and fluorescent bulbs at facilities equipped to handle hazardous waste. See oceana.org/mercury and nrdc.org/mercury for safety information and action guides. —*Jessica Ridenour*

No Pet Left Behind

Most pet owners will agree: Feathered and four-legged friends are family members too. In fact, many victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita refused to leave their flooded homes because rescue shelters forbade animals, essentially forcing evacuees to choose between their own safety and the safety of their pets.

To make sure no California pet-lovers will ever have to face such a terrible choice, US Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA) recently introduced the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards (PETS) Act. The PETS act would require emergency preparedness authorities to include plans for accommodating pets and service animals in future disaster plans, so Sparky won't be left to fend for himself. Show your support for this Act, volunteer or donate to the Humane Society at hsus.org. —*JR*