

Questions:

1. Is Defence testing fish in Ludmilla/Rapid Creek for PFAS? What levels are they testing at? Are they safe for human consumption?
2. Can the fish travel to Darwin Harbour?
3. Is defence testing fish in Darwin Harbor? What levels are they testing at? Are they safe for human consumption?

Response:

In March 2017 Defence commenced a detailed environmental investigation into the nature and extent of PFAS on and near RAAF Base Darwin.

Defence is currently conducting the second stage of the detailed environmental investigation process, a Detailed Site Investigation (DSI). The DSI involves the sampling of soil, sediment, surface water, groundwater, plants and animals with the RAAF Base Darwin Investigation Area.

Biota sampling was undertaken in the freshwater reaches of Ludmilla Creek and Rapid Creek.

Due to the generally small size of the fish and crustaceans collected, often several of the same species were grouped and submitted together to obtain the sampling weight required for the analysis.

Biota samples (principally fin-fish and crustaceans) were collected from the freshwater reaches of Rapid Creek and from a site drain that leads to Ludmilla Creek. The assessment evaluated the concentration of PFAS within the various specimens, and was timed to coincide with the end of the wet season. An end of dry season sampling event will also be conducted and reported in the supplementary report following the wet season.

The finfish specimens collected were not of edible size and therefore were not filleted and were analysed whole. The results have not been compared against FSANZ trigger values for finfish (5.2 µg/kg), on the basis that analysis of whole samples will over estimate fillet concentrations due to the inclusion of liver and other organs.

The Chief Health Officer at the NT Department of Health has previously advised that water from Rapid Creek and Ludmilla Creek is not suitable for drinking due to fluctuating microbiological levels.

The border of the RAAF Base Darwin Investigation Area extends to Darwin Harbour. Sampling from Darwin Harbour will occur.

Defence takes advice on food safety from the Environment Protection Authority Northern Territory and other relevant Government Agencies. There are no restrictions on the consumption of fish in Darwin Harbor due to PFAS contamination.

Findings from the DSI will be compiled in a report which is expected to be finalised and released to the public in early 2018.

Further information is available on the [RAAF Base Darwin PFAS Investigation website](#).