

# Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment



Matthew Rodriguez  
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Edmund G. Brown Jr.  
Governor

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Charlton H. Bonham, Director  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
1416 Ninth Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, California 95814

**FROM:** Lauren Zeise, Ph.D.   
Director

**DATE:** January 25, 2018

**SUBJECT:** RECOMMENDATION TO OPEN THE LAST REMAINING AREAS  
CLOSED TO COMMERCIAL LOBSTER FISHING

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The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), in consultation with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), has determined that consumption of lobster taken from state waters around the northeast end of Santa Cruz Island (Santa Barbara County) and the south side of Anacapa Island (Ventura County), no longer poses a significant threat for domoic acid exposure. OEHHA, in consultation with CDPH, therefore recommends that the remaining portions of the commercial lobster fishery be opened. This determination is based on data from samplings of lobster and analysis of these samples by CDPH laboratories. A table showing results of domoic acid sampling and analysis is provided below.

Domoic acid poisoning in humans may occur within minutes to hours after consumption of affected seafood and can result in signs and symptoms ranging from vomiting and diarrhea to permanent loss of short-term memory (Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning), coma, or death.

Current federal action levels for domoic acid are 20 parts per million (ppm) for all fish, with the exception of 30 ppm in the viscera of Dungeness crabs. State and federal laws

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**California Environmental Protection Agency**

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prohibit the commercial distribution of seafood products that contain domoic acid above the action levels.

CDPH and OEHHA continue to recommend that consumers avoid eating the viscera (internal organs, also known as “butter” or “guts”) of lobster or crabs, as the viscera usually contain much higher levels of domoic acid than the meat.

If you have questions, please contact me at [Lauren.Zeise@oehha.ca.gov](mailto:Lauren.Zeise@oehha.ca.gov) or (916) 322-6325.

### Lobster Sampling Results

| PORT            | AREA                          | SAMPLE COLLECTION DATE        | NUMBER OF SAMPLES | VISCERA SAMPLE RESULTS: | AVERAGE LEVEL IN VISCERA | SAMPLES EXCEEDING ACTION |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Channel Islands | Anacapa Island (Block 684)    | 10/26/2017                    | 6                 | < 2.5 - 8.4 ppm         | 2 ppm                    | 0%                       |
|                 | Santa Cruz Island (Block 685) | 9/29/2017                     | 4                 | 2.9 - 730.0 ppm         | 226.6 ppm                | 50%                      |
|                 |                               | 10/25/2017                    | 7                 | < 2.5 - 89 ppm          | 42.1 ppm                 | 71%                      |
|                 |                               | 11/02/2017                    | 6                 | < 2.5 - 140.0 ppm       | 52.7 ppm                 | 50%                      |
|                 |                               | 11/27/2017                    | 6                 | < 2.5 - 21 ppm          | 4.0 ppm                  | 17%                      |
|                 |                               | 12/09/2017                    | 6                 | < 2.5 - 11 ppm          | 1.8 ppm                  | 0%                       |
|                 |                               | 12/19/2017                    | 6                 | 6.2 - 37 ppm            | 17.6 ppm                 | 33%                      |
|                 |                               | 01/02/2018                    | 6                 | Non-detectable          | Non-detectable           | 0%                       |
|                 |                               | 01/08/2018                    | 6                 | < 2.5 - 19 ppm          | 5.2 ppm                  | 0%                       |
|                 |                               | Santa Cruz Island (Block 708) | 11/03/2017        | 6                       | < 2.5 - 110.0 ppm        | 29.1 ppm                 |
|                 | 11/30/2017                    |                               | 6                 | < 2.5 - 21.0 ppm        | 4.0 ppm                  | 17%                      |
|                 | 12/13/2017                    |                               | 6                 | < 2.5 - 4.4 ppm         | 1.8 ppm                  | 0%                       |
|                 | 12/21/2017                    |                               | 6                 | < 2.5 - 2.9 ppm         | 0.5 ppm                  | 0%                       |
|                 | Santa Cruz Island (Block 709) | 11/14/2017                    | 3                 | < 2.5 - 18 ppm          | 6.0 ppm                  | 0%                       |