

Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment



Matthew Rodriguez
Secretary for
Environmental Protection

Lauren Zeise, Ph.D., Director
Headquarters • 1001 I Street • Sacramento, California 95814
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 4010 • Sacramento, California 95812-4010
Oakland Office • Mailing Address: 1515 Clay Street, 16th Floor • Oakland, California 94612



Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor

MEMORANDUM

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

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

DATE: January 11, 2017

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION ON OPENING OF THE LAST REMAINING AREA
CLOSED TO COMMERCIAL DUNGENESS CRAB FISHING

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) has determined, in consultation with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), that consumption of Dungeness Crab taken from state waters in Mendocino County north of 39° 33.3' N Latitude (near Ten Mile River) and south of 40° 01' N Latitude (near Shelter Cove) no longer poses a significant threat for domoic acid exposure. This determination is based on data from repeated sampling of Dungeness Crab and analysis of these samples by CDPH laboratories. OEHHA is therefore recommending the opening of this portion of the commercial Dungeness Crab fishery. This is the last area in the state that remains closed to commercial Dungeness Crab fishing due to domoic acid levels in crab.

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 prohibit the commercial distribution of seafood products that contain domoic acid levels above the action level. In contrast to levels seen earlier, concentrations of domoic acid in recent viscera samples of Dungeness Crab from 39° 33.3' N Latitude to 40° 01' N Latitude did not test above the action level of 30 ppm. As such, OEHHA recommends the opening of the commercial Dungeness Crab fishery in this last remaining area in a manner consistent with the emergency regulations adopted on November 15, 2016.

California Environmental Protection Agency

Sacramento: (916) 324-7572 Oakland: (510) 622-3200

www.oehha.ca.gov

Charlton H. Bonham
January 11, 2017
Page 2

The sampling results for Dungeness Crab caught in state waters near Fort Bragg are provided in the table on page 3.

While CDPH and OEHHA concur that Dungeness Crab taken from this area are safe to consume, CDPH and OEHHA recommend as a best preparation practice that consumers should avoid eating the viscera (internal organs, also known as "butter" or "guts") of 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 or (916) 322-6325.

Dungeness Crab Sampling Results

PORT	AREA	SAMPLE COLLECTION DATE	NUMBER OF SAMPLES	VISCERA SAMPLE RESULTS: RANGE	AVERAGE LEVEL IN VISCERA	SAMPLES EXCEEDING ACTION LEVEL (30 ppm in viscera)
Fort Bragg	Usal	9/16/16	6	<2.5-64 ppm	17 ppm	17%
	Usal	10/11/16	6	7.3-74 ppm	33 ppm	33%
	Usal	11/12/16	6	3.8-50 ppm	27 ppm	50%
	Pt. Arena	11/12/16	6	8-47 ppm	26 ppm	33%
	Usal	11/22/16	6	6-170 ppm	49 ppm	33%
	Pt. Arena	11/22/16	6	7.6-31 ppm	18 ppm	17%
	Usal	12/3/16	6	<2.5-17 ppm	4 ppm	0%
	Shelter Cove	12/3/16	6	<2.5-17 ppm	8 ppm	0%
	Usal	12/11/16	6	<2.5-64 ppm	20 ppm	33%
	Pt. Arena	12/7/16	6	<2.5-30 ppm	6 ppm	0%
	Pt. Arena	12/12/16	6	<2.5-7.2 ppm	2 ppm	0%
	Ten Mile	12/15/16	6	4.9-14 ppm	11 ppm	0%
	Usal	12/18/16	6	4.8-54 ppm	18 ppm	17%
	Usal	12/28/16	6	2.5-22 ppm	10 ppm	0%
	Usal	1/4/17	6	5.6-23 ppm	11 ppm	0%

Note: correction made to sampling date in this memo