

Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment



Matthew Rodriguez
Secretary for
Environmental Protection


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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. 
Director

DATE: November 3, 2017

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION TO OPEN THE COMMERCIAL LOBSTER
FISHERY NEAR ANACAPA ISLAND

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 near Anacapa Island (Ventura County) no longer poses a significant threat for domoic acid exposure. OEHHA and CDPH recommend that a portion of the commercial lobster fishery in state waters near Anacapa Island be opened. This determination is based on data from samplings of lobster and analysis of these samples by CDPH laboratories. State waters extend three nautical miles beyond outmost islands, reefs, and rocks.

The specific area recommended for reopening near Anacapa Island includes state waters in block 684 east of 119° 30.000' W longitude and north of 34° 00.000' N latitude.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife, CDPH, and OEHHA are continuing to monitor and analyze lobster to determine when the remaining closed areas of Santa Cruz and Anacapa Islands can be opened safely.

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.

California Environmental Protection Agency

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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 above the action level.

While the recreational fishery remains open, CDPH and OEHHA strongly 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 or (916) 322-6325.

Lobster Sampling Results

PORT	AREA	SAMPLE COLLECTION DATE	NUMBER OF SAMPLES	VISCERA SAMPLE RESULTS: RANGE	AVERAGE LEVEL IN VISCERA	SAMPLES EXCEEDING ACTION LEVEL
San Diego	Scripps Pier (Block 842)	9/29/17	6	Non-detectable	Non-detectable	0%
Channel Islands	Santa Cruz Island (Block 685)	9/29/17	4	2.9 - 730.0 ppm	226.6 ppm	50%
Channel Islands	Santa Cruz Island (Block 685)	10/25/17	7	<2.5 - 89.0 ppm	42.1 ppm	71%
Channel Islands	Anacapa Island (Block 684)	10/26/17	6	<2.5 - 8.4 ppm	2.0 ppm	0%