




Lauren Zeise, Ph.D., Director
Matthew Rodriguez, Secretary for Environmental Protection
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: October 16, 2018

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION TO CLOSE THE COMMERCIAL LOBSTER
FISHERY NEAR ANACAPA ISLAND (VENTURA COUNTY)

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), in consultation with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), recommends that the commercial lobster fishery in state waters around Anacapa Island in Ventura County be closed, based on a finding of elevated levels of domoic acid in the viscera and roe of some lobsters collected from this area. This determination is based on data from samplings of lobster and analysis of these samples by CDPH laboratories. The specific area closed includes all state waters surrounding Anacapa Island east of 119° 30.000' W. longitude, and west of 119° 10.000' W. longitude, in blocks 683, 684, 706, and 707. This closure area in blocks 684 and 707 includes a portion of state waters near the eastern edge of Santa Cruz Island (Santa Barbara County). State waters extend three nautical miles beyond the outermost islands, reefs, and rocks.

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 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”) and roe (reproductive parts) of lobster or crabs, as the sampled viscera and roe contained much higher levels of domoic acid than the meat.

CDFW, CDPH, and OEHHA are continuing to monitor and analyze lobster to determine when the blocks closed in the area of Anacapa Island can be opened safely.

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	TISSUE TYPE	SAMPLE RESULTS: RANGE	AVERAGE LEVEL	SAMPLES EXCEEDING ACTION LEVEL
Channel Islands	Anacapa Island	9/28/18	7	Viscera	6.3 - 210.0 ppm	78.3 ppm	71%
	(Block 684)	9/28/18	4	Roe	28 – 50 ppm	-- ppm	100%