




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, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, California 95814

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

**DATE:** October 25, 2018

**SUBJECT:** RECOMMENDATION TO DELAY THE OPENING OF THE  
RECREATIONAL DUNGENESS CRAB FISHERY FROM PATRICK'S  
POINT TO THE OREGON BORDER (HUMBOLDT AND DEL NORTE  
COUNTIES)

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The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), in consultation with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), recommends that the opening of the recreational Dungeness crab fishery be delayed in state waters from Patrick's Point (41° 8.00' N. latitude) north to the California/Oregon border (Humboldt and Del Norte counties). This recommendation is based on a finding of elevated levels of domoic acid in the viscera and meat of Dungeness crab that were collected from this area and analyzed by CDPH laboratories, as shown in the table 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.

For other sections of the coast that will be open for recreational harvesting of Dungeness crab and lobster, CDPH and OEHHA recommend as a best preparation practice that consumers avoid eating the viscera (internal organs, also known as "butter" or "guts") because they usually contain much higher levels of domoic acid than the meat.

CDFW, CDPH, and OEHHA are continuing to monitor and analyze Dungeness crab to determine when the recreational crab fishery between Patrick's Point and the Oregon border can be opened safely.

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

### Dungeness Crab Sampling Results

PORT	AREA	SAMPLE COLLECTION DATE	NUMBER OF SAMPLES	TISSUE TYPE	SAMPLE RESULTS: RANGE	AVERAGE LEVEL	SAMPLES EXCEEDING ACTION LEVEL*
Crescent City	George Reef	10/2/2018	6	Viscera	23 - 61 ppm	41.7 ppm	83%
	Klamath River	10/2/2018	6	Viscera	19 - 28 ppm	24.8 ppm	0%
Trinidad	Trinidad North	9/27/2018	6	Viscera	3.3 - 46 ppm	19.2 ppm	33%
		9/27/2018	2	Meat	6.8 - 24 ppm	15.4 ppm	50%
	Trinidad South	9/27/2018	6	Viscera	3.0 - 30 ppm	12.9 ppm	0%
		9/27/2018	1	Meat	7.4 ppm	--	0%

\*The action level for viscera is 30 ppm, and for meat is 20 ppm.