

Staff Summary for June 19-20, 2024

30C. Department Marine Region Report

Today's Item	Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action <input type="checkbox"/>
I. Public discussion of action taken to close the recreational razor clam fishery in Humboldt County due to elevated levels of domoic acid (Pursuant to subdivision 5523(a)(2), California Fish and Game Code)		
II. Update on annual recreational ocean salmon regulations, and automatic conformance to federal regulations (Pursuant to Section 1.95)		

The Department will also highlight items of note since the last Commission meeting.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)**Background**

- I. This meeting provides an opportunity for public discussion of action taken by the Department relative to the recreational razor clam fishery in Humboldt County (exhibits 1-3).
- II. The Marine Region will provide an update on the annual automatic conformance for recreational ocean salmon regulations (Exhibit 5).

Press releases related to these topics are provided as exhibits 4, 6 and 7.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)**Recommendation (N/A)****Exhibits**

1. [Memo to the Department from the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, California Environmental Protection Agency, dated May 2, 2024](#)
2. [Department's Director Declaration of Fisheries Closure Due to A Public Health Threat Caused by Elevated Levels of Domoic Acid in Razor Clams, dated May 2, 2024](#)
3. [Department memo to the Commission regarding razor clam fishery, received May 29, 2024](#)
4. [Department press release on razor clam fishery closure, dated May 2, 2024](#)
5. [Department memo to the Commission regarding recreational ocean salmon regulations conformance to federal regulations, received May 29, 2024](#)
6. [Department press release on Pacific Fishery Management Council's recommendation to close California's 2024 ocean salmon fisheries, dated April 10, 2024](#)
7. [Department press release on information for California anglers bound for Oregon's recreational ocean salmon fisheries, dated May 24, 2024](#)

Motion (N/A)



Gavin Newsom, Governor
Yana Garcia, Secretary for Environmental Protection
Lauren Zeise, Ph.D., Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Charlton H. Bonham, Director
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
715 P Street
Sacramento, California 95814

FROM: Lauren Zeise, Ph.D. *Lauren Zeise*
Director Lauren Zeise (May 2, 2024 08:13 PDT)

DATE: May 2, 2024

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION TO CLOSE THE RECREATIONAL RAZOR CLAM FISHERY IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), in consultation with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), has determined that consumption of razor clams taken from Humboldt County poses a significant threat for domoic acid exposure. OEHHA, in consultation with CDPH, therefore recommends that the recreational razor clam fishery be closed in Humboldt County. This recommendation is based on a finding of elevated levels of domoic acid in the meat of razor clams 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 and shellfish, with the exception of > 30 ppm for the viscera of Dungeness crabs. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), CDPH, and OEHHA will collect, monitor, and analyze razor clams to determine when the recreational razor clam fishery in Humboldt County can be re-opened safely.

The CDFW fisheries closure remains in place for the recreational razor clam fishery in Del Norte County.¹

If you have questions, please contact me at Lauren.Zeise@oehha.ca.gov or Dr. Wes Smith at Wesley.Smith@oehha.ca.gov.

Razor Clam Sampling Results

COUNTY	LOCATION	SAMPLE COLLECTION DATE	TISSUE TYPE	DOMOIC ACID (ppm) ^{***}
Humboldt	Clam Beach	04/24/2024	Meat*	57
			Meat**	23
			Meat**	16

* Composite sample of three individual clams.

** Composite sample of four individual clams.

*** The action level for razor clam meat is ≥ 20 ppm.

cc: June Weintraub, Sci.D.
Deputy Director, Center for Environmental Health
California Department of Public Health
1500 Capitol Avenue, Suite 520
Sacramento, California 95814

Melissa Miller-Henson
Executive Director
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, California 95814

¹ California Department of Fish and Wildlife declaration of public health fisheries closure, online at <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=216807&inline>



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
 DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
 Director's Office
 P.O. Box 944209
 Sacramento, CA 94244-2090
wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
 DECLARATION OF FISHERIES CLOSURE
 DUE TO A PUBLIC HEALTH THREAT
 CAUSED BY ELEVATED LEVELS OF DOMOIC ACID IN RAZOR CLAMS**

Pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 5523, I find and declare that

I.

On May 2, 2024, the Director of the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment in consultation with the State Public Health Officer at the California Department of Public Health determined that razor clams in state waters of Humboldt County pose a human health risk due to elevated levels of domoic acid and recommended to close the recreational razor clam fishery in the affected area.

II.

THEREFORE, under the authority granted by Fish and Game Code Section 5523, I am closing the recreational razor clam fishery in state waters of Humboldt County.

The closure will remain in place until I am notified by the public health agencies named above, that a health hazard regarding razor clams no longer exists.

Charlton H. Bonham, Director

5/2/2024 10:45 AM PT

Date/Time

Memorandum

Date: May 28, 2024

To: Melissa Miller-Henson
Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission

From: Charlton H. Bonham
Director

Subject: Notification of Recreational Razor Clam Fishery Closure in Humboldt County due to Domoic Acid

On May 2, 2024 the Director of the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), in consultation with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), recommended the Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) close the recreational razor clam fishery in Humboldt County. This recommendation was due to clam samples exceeding the Federal action level (≥ 20 ppm) for domoic acid.

Following OEHHA's recommendation, the Department closed the fishery and notified the public via a press release. Pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 5523, the Department is notifying the Fish and Game Commission of the closure for discussion at its next scheduled meeting.

The razor clam fishery has been open in Humboldt County since August 7, 2023 following the last domoic acid closure that occurred on April 21, 2023. In addition, the recreational razor clam fishery has been closed due to domoic acid in Del Norte County since November 9, 2023.

The Department will continue to work with CDPH and OEHHA to collect, monitor and analyze razor clams to determine when the recreational razor clam fishery can be safely reopened in these areas.

Enclosures:

[Director Declaration to Close Razor Clam Fishery in Humboldt County](#)

[Press Release 5/2/2024: Razor Clam Fishery Closes in Humboldt County Due to Public Health Hazard](#)

Melissa Miller-Henson, Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission
May 28, 2024
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cc: Chad Dibble, Deputy Director
Wildlife and Fisheries Division
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Craig Shuman, D. Env., Regional Manager
Marine Region
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Joanna Grebel, Program Manager
Marine Region
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Christy Juhasz, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)
Marine Region
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Razor Clam Fishery Closes in Humboldt County Due to Public Health Hazard

May 2, 2024



The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Director Charlton H. Bonham has [closed the recreational razor clam fishery in Humboldt County](#) following a [recommendation from state health agencies](#) determining that consumption of razor clams in the area poses a significant threat for domoic acid exposure.

Pseudo-nitzschia, a naturally occurring, single-celled marine alga, produces the potent neurotoxin domoic acid under certain ocean conditions. Bivalve shellfish, like clams and mussels, accumulate the toxin without being harmed. In fact, razor clams are known to bioaccumulate domoic acid, meaning it may not clear their system until long after the ocean conditions that caused it have abated.

[Sampling of razor clams from Clam Beach in Humboldt County in late April](#) (PDF) found clams exceeding the current federal action level for domoic acid of greater than or equal to 20 parts per million.

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. There is no way to prepare clams for consumption that will remove the toxin – cooking and freezing have no effect.

The recreational razor clam fishery in Del Norte County remains closed due to elevated levels of domoic acid. The closure, which [began in November 2023](#), will remain in effect until state health agencies determine razor clams no longer pose a health risk.

CDFW will continue to work with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment to collect, monitor and analyze razor clams to determine when the recreational razor clam fishery can be reopened safely in these areas.

For more information on any fishery closure or health advisories, please visit: www.wildlife.ca.gov/Fishing/Ocean/Health-Advisories.

To get the latest information on current fishing season closures related to domoic acid, please call CDFW's Domoic Acid Fishery Closure Information Line at (831) 649-2883.

For the latest consumption warnings, please call CDPH's Biotxin information Line at (510) 412-4643 or toll-free at (800) 553-4133.

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Media Contacts:

[Christy Juhasz](#), CDFW Marine Region, (707) 292-2480

[Steve Gonzalez](#), CDFW Communications, (916) 804-1714

Memorandum

Date: May 28, 2024

To: Melissa Miller-Henson
Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission

From: Charlton H. Bonham
Director

Subject: **Submission of Regulatory Text to Conform Recreational Ocean Salmon Regulations to Federal Regulations for the May 16 through November 2024 and April through May 15, 2025 Time Periods**

On Wednesday, April 10, 2024, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) acted unanimously to recommend the closure of California's commercial and recreational ocean salmon fisheries through the end of the year, mirroring recommendations made last year to close the fisheries in 2023. Consecutive years of drought, habitat compression in the ocean, and associated changes in ocean forage assemblages have created substantially difficult conditions for Chinook Salmon in the southern range of its distribution.

Attached please find the Regulatory Text for the May 16 through November 2024 and April through May 15, 2025 recreational ocean salmon regulations. Automatic conformance regulations (subsection 1.95(b)(2)(A), Title 14, CCR) require the Fish and Game Commission to: (1) Submit amended recreational ocean salmon fishing regulations to the Office of Administrative Law for publication in the California Code of Regulations and (2) File the amended regulations with the Secretary of State. Both requirements must be completed no later than 10 days after publication of the Federal Register, which published May 21, 2024.

Attachment

ec: Chad Dibble, Deputy Director
Wildlife and Fisheries Division
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Eric Kord, Assistant Chief
Law Enforcement Division
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Craig Shuman, D. Env., Regional Manager
Marine Region
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Melissa Miller-Henson, Executive Director
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Marci Yaremko, Env. Program Manager
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Kandice Morgenstern, Sr. Environmental Scientist
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David Thesell, Deputy Executive Director
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Sherrie Fonbuena, Analyst
Fish and Game Commission

PFMC Recommends Repeat Closure for California's 2024 Ocean Salmon Fisheries

April 10, 2024



On Wednesday, April 10, 2024, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) acted unanimously to recommend closure of California's commercial and recreational ocean salmon fisheries through the end of the year, mirroring recommendations made last year to close the fisheries in 2023.

Salmon stocks continue to be impacted in California from ongoing issues associated with drought and climate disruption. The salmon currently present and returning to California's coast and rivers were impacted by a multi-year drought, severe wildfires, and associated impacts to spawning and rearing habitat, harmful algal blooms and ocean forage shifts. The low ocean abundance forecasts, coupled with low 2023 returns, led the PFMC to recommend full closure of California's commercial and recreational ocean salmon fisheries.

After reviewing the PFMC recommendation, it is expected that the National Marine Fisheries Service will take regulatory action to enact the closure, effective in mid-May. In addition, the California Fish and Game Commission will consider whether to adopt a closure of inland salmon fisheries at its May 15 teleconference meeting.

"After the closure last year, this decision is not an easy one to make," said CDFW Director Charlton H. Bonham. "While we have been enjoying back-to-back rainy and wet winters this year and last, the salmon that will benefit from these conditions aren't expected to return to California until around 2026 or 2027. The current salmon for this year's season were impacted by the difficult environmental factors present three to five years ago."

"While incredibly painful to fishing families and fishing communities, the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations supports the closure," said George Bradshaw,

president of PCFFA. “We all need to be doing everything we can to give California’s salmon a chance to recover. It has to be an all hands-on deck effort to ensure survival for our Central Valley and Klamath salmon runs.”

Following today’s actions, CDFW will work to expedite a request for federal fishery resource disaster determination for the State of California 2024 Sacramento River Fall Chinook and Klamath River Fall Chinook ocean salmon fisheries. Governor Newsom made a similar request in response to the closure in 2023, which was approved. The Department is currently seeking comments on the [2023 spend plan \(PDF\)\(opens in new tab\)](#) for the \$20,625,729 that has been allocated by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration for the disaster. Comments may be provided via email through 5 p.m., April 19, 2024, at SalmonDisaster@wildlife.ca.gov.

Salmon are significantly important to California’s cultural and natural resources. These important species provide significant commercial, recreational, economic, intrinsic, and cultural benefits to California Native American tribes, fishing communities and the state. California is taking several steps to rebuild salmon stocks across California. In late January 2024, Governor Gavin Newsom announced a [California Salmon Strategy for a Hotter, Drier Future: Restoring Aquatic Ecosystems in the Age of Climate Change \(PDF\)\(opens in new tab\)](#). The strategy has six priorities and 71 actions that will benefit salmon stocks in California.

More information about the PFMC is available on the [PFMC website.\(opens in new tab\)](#) More information about [federal fishery disaster relief](#) and [ocean salmon fishing seasons](#) is available on the CDFW website.

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Media Contact:

[Steve Gonzalez](#), CDFW Communications, (916) 804-1714

[Kandice Morgenstern](#), CDFW Marine Region (707) 494-4621

Important Information for California Anglers Bound for Oregon's Recreational Ocean Salmon Fisheries: Oregon Salmon Must be Brought onto Oregon Shores

May 24, 2024



With the 2024 closure of ocean salmon fisheries in California, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) officials are reminding anglers of important rules relating to transport of salmon taken from Oregon into California.

In ocean waters any salmon taken in Oregon fisheries may not be brought to shore in California. However, it is legal for Californians to trailer their vessels to launch and fish from Oregon ports under applicable Oregon fishing licenses, regulations and reporting requirements. Salmon harvested in Oregon may be brought into California over land if also accompanied by a [California Declaration for Entry Form](#). The declaration must be completed at or prior to the time of entry. After the time of entry, a copy of the completed declaration shall be submitted to CDFW within 24 hours.

On May 16, 2024, the National Marine Fisheries Service on advice from the Pacific Fishery Management Council and West Coast fisheries agencies, including CDFW, took in season action to implement a landing boundary at the Oregon/California state line for recreational ocean salmon fisheries in Oregon waters just north of California. The new requirement states that any salmon taken under Oregon sportfishing regulations in the area between Humbug Mountain and the Oregon/California state line, also known as the

Oregon Klamath Management Zone, must be landed north of the Oregon/California state line for the 2024 fishing season.

Regulations for ocean salmon fisheries off the West Coast were published May 21, 2024, in the [Federal Register under citation 89 FR 44553](#)([opens in new tab](#)) and went into effect May 16, 2024. The regulations implement the closure of California's ocean salmon fisheries for the remainder of 2024 as recommended last month by the Pacific Fishery Management Council. Pursuant to California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 1.95, ocean salmon sport fishing regulations in state waters automatically conform to federal regulations. More information about ocean salmon season closures and regulations can be found on CDFW's [ocean salmon page](#).

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