




Gavin Newsom, Governor  
Yana Garcia, Secretary for Environmental Protection  
David Edwards, Ph.D., Acting Director

**MEMORANDUM**

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

**FROM:** David Edwards, Ph.D.   
Acting Director  
David Edwards (Oct 30, 2024 16:40 PDT)

**DATE:** October 30, 2024

**SUBJECT:** RECOMMENDATION TO DELAY THE OPENING OF THE RECREATIONAL DUNGENESS CRAB FISHERY IN BIOTOXIN MANAGEMENT AREA A, FROM READING ROCK STATE MARINE RESERVE NORTH TO THE CALIFORNIA/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 of Biotxin Management Area A, from Reading Rock State Marine Reserve (41° 17.6' N. latitude) north to the California/Oregon border (42° N. latitude) (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. A table presenting the results of domoic acid sampling and analysis from the impacted areas is shown 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  $\geq 20$  parts per million (ppm) for all fish and shellfish, with the exception of  $> 30$  ppm in the viscera of Dungeness crabs.

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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 in Biotxin Management Area A can be opened safely.

If you have questions, please contact me at [David.Edwards@oehha.ca.gov](mailto:David.Edwards@oehha.ca.gov) or Dr. Wesley Smith at [Wesley.Smith@oehha.ca.gov](mailto:Wesley.Smith@oehha.ca.gov).

*David Edwards*

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### Dungeness Crab Sampling Results

AREA; PORT	COLLECTION SITE	SAMPLE COLLECTION DATE	NUMBER OF SAMPLES	TISSUE TYPE	SAMPLE RESULTS: RANGE	AVERAGE LEVEL	% OF SAMPLES EXCEEDING ACTION LEVEL*
BIOTOXIN MANAGEMENT AREA A;	George Reef	10/12/2024	6	Viscera	7.8 - 34	22.6	16.7%
			1	Meat	13	--	0%
CRESCENT CITY	Klamath River	10/12/2024	6	Viscera	10 - 98	37.7	50%
			3	Meat	11-29	19.7	33%

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

cc: June Weintraub, Sc.D.  
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