




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 \(May 9, 2025 11:26 PDT\)](#)

DATE: May 9, 2025

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION TO RESTRICT RECREATIONAL TAKE OF
PACIFIC SARDINES TO THOSE FOR BAIT USE FROM WATERS OFF
THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIGHT (MULTIPLE COUNTIES)

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), in consultation with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), has determined that consumption of Pacific sardines taken from waters off the Southern California Bight poses a significant threat for domoic acid exposure. OEHHA and CDPH therefore recommend restricting the recreational take of Pacific sardines from this area to those sardines intended for bait use only.

Given the migratory habits of this coastal pelagic species and a regional harmful algal bloom producing domoic acid, the area recommended for recreational fishery restriction includes waters between Point Conception (34° 27' N. Lat.) and the California/Mexico border (Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego counties).

This recommendation is based on levels of domoic acid in the Pacific sardines 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 ≥ 20 parts per million (ppm) for all fish and shellfish, except for > 30 ppm in the viscera of Dungeness crab.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), CDPH, and OEHHA are continuing to monitor and analyze Pacific sardines to determine when the restrictions on the recreational Pacific sardine fishery from this area to those for bait use only can be lifted.

If you have questions, please contact me at David.Edwards@oehha.ca.gov or Dr. Wesley Smith at Wesley.Smith@oehha.ca.gov.

David Edwards

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Pacific Sardine Sampling Results

PORT	COLLECTION SITE	SAMPLE COLLECTION DATE	TISSUE TYPE **	DOMOIC ACID (ppm) *
SAN PEDRO	Block 762	4/30/25	Viscera	180
			Viscera	200
			Whole Body	33

*The action level is ≥ 20 ppm.

** Composite sample of 6 individual fish.

cc: June Weintraub, Sc.D.
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