




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 COMMERCIAL LANDINGS OF  
PACIFIC SARDINES TO THOSE FOR LIVE BAIT USE ONLY FROM  
WATERS OFF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIGHT  
(MULTIPLE COUNTIES)

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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 that commercial Pacific sardine landings from this area be restricted to those for live bait only.

Given the migratory habits of this coastal pelagic species and a regional harmful algal bloom producing domoic acid, the area recommended for commercial landing 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  $\geq 20$  parts per million (ppm) for all fish and shellfish, except for  $> 30$  ppm in the viscera of Dungeness crab. State and federal laws prohibit the commercial distribution of seafood products that contain domoic acid levels above the action level.

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

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*

**Pacific Sardine Sampling Results** David Edwards (May 9, 2025 11:26 PDT)

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  $\geq 20$  ppm.

\*\* Composite sample of 6 individual fish.

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