



Gavin Newsom, Governor
Yana Garcia, Secretary for Environmental Protection
Kristina Thayer, Ph.D., Director

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Kristina Thayer, Ph.D. *Kristina Thayer*
Director [Kristina Thayer \(Jun 13, 2025 11:52 PDT\)](#)

DATE: June 13, 2025

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION TO REMOVE THE RESTRICTION ON THE
RECREATIONAL TAKE OF PACIFIC SARDINES 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 no longer poses a significant threat for domoic acid exposure. The impacted area includes waters between Point Conception (34° 27' N. Lat.) and the California/Mexico border (Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego counties). OEHHA and CDPH recommend lifting the restriction that limited recreational take of Pacific sardines to bait use only. This recommendation is based on levels of domoic acid below the federal action level in the viscera and whole bodies of Pacific sardines collected from this area and analyzed by CDPH laboratories. A table presenting the results of domoic acid analysis in samples from the impacted areas is shown below.

Domoic acid poisoning in humans may occur within minutes to hours after consumption of contaminated 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.

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

Pacific Sardine Sampling Results

PORT	COLLECTION SITE	SAMPLE COLLECTION DATES	TISSUE TYPE	DOMOIC ACID (ppm) ^a
SAN PEDRO	Block 829	5/22/25	viscera*	< 2.5
			viscera*	< 2.5
			whole body*	< 2.5
			whole body*	< 2.5
	Block 826	5/28/25	viscera**	< 2.5
			whole body**	< 2.5
	Block 807	5/30/25	viscera**	< 2.5
			whole body**	< 2.5

*Composite sample of 5 individual fish.

**Composite sample of 8 – 10 individual fish.

^a The action level is ≥ 20 ppm.

cc: June Weintraub, Sc.D.
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