




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

MEMORANDUM

TO: Meghan Hertel, Director
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
715 P Street
Sacramento, California 95814

FROM: Kristina Thayer, Ph.D.
Director


David Edwards (Jun 26, 2026 09:48:30 PDT)
for Kristina Thayer

DATE: June 26, 2026

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION TO RESTRICT COMMERCIAL LANDINGS OF
NORTHERN ANCHOVY AND PACIFIC SARDINE TO THOSE FOR BAIT
USE ONLY IN PORTIONS OF SAN MATEO, SANTA CRUZ, AND
MONTEREY COUNTIES

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), in consultation with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), has determined that consumption of Northern anchovy and Pacific sardine taken from Pigeon Point (37° 11.00' N. Lat.) to Point Lobos (36° 31.46' N. Lat.) (San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and Monterey counties) poses a significant threat for domoic acid exposure. Given the migratory habits of these coastal pelagic species and a regional harmful algal bloom producing domoic acid, commercial landing restrictions are recommended for waters of the greater Monterey Bay area defined above. OEHHA and CDPH therefore recommend that commercial landings of Northern anchovy and Pacific sardine from this area be restricted to those for bait use only, and not for human consumption or for use in pet food products.

This recommendation is based on levels of domoic acid in the Northern anchovy and Pacific sardine 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 area 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. 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 Northern anchovy and Pacific sardine to determine when restrictions on commercial landings of Northern anchovy and Pacific sardine from this area to those for bait use only can be lifted.

If you have questions, please contact Dr. David Edwards at David.Edwards@oehha.ca.gov or Dr. Elaine Khan at Elaine.Khan@oehha.ca.gov.

Northern Anchovy and Pacific Sardine Sampling Results from Monterey Bay

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SPECIES	PORT; COLLECTION SITE	SAMPLE COLLECTION DATE	TISSUE TYPE	COMPOSITE SAMPLE SIZE	DOMOIC ACID (ppm) *
Pacific Sardine	Monterey; Block 509	6/5/26	Viscera	7	26
			Viscera	7	30
			Whole Body	7	4.7
			Whole Body	6	3.6
		6/17/26	Viscera	3	40
			Whole Body	3	<2.5

SPECIES	PORT; COLLECTION SITE	SAMPLE COLLECTION DATE	TISSUE TYPE	COMPOSITE SAMPLE SIZE	DOMOIC ACID (ppm) *
Northern Anchovy	Monterey; Block 509	6/16/26	Viscera	7	61
			Viscera	7	54
			Whole Body	7	15
			Whole Body	6	15
	Monterey; Block 507	6/16/26	Viscera	16	55
			Whole Body	16	14
Whole Body			16	13	

*The action level for all tissue types in these species is ≥ 20 ppm.

cc: June Weintraub, Sc.D.
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