



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. *Kristina Thayer*
Director

DATE: July 31, 2026

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION TO REMOVE THE RESTRICTION ON THE
COMMERCIAL LANDINGS OF NORTHERN ANCHOVY AND PACIFIC
SARDINE 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 waters of the greater Monterey Bay area from Pigeon Point (37° 11.00' N. Lat.) to Point Lobos (36° 31.46' N. Lat.) (San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and Monterey counties) no longer poses a significant threat for domoic acid exposure. OEHHA and CDPH therefore recommend lifting the bait use only restriction implemented on June 26, 2026, for commercial landings of northern anchovy and Pacific sardine from this area.

This recommendation is based on levels of domoic acid below the federal action level in the viscera and whole bodies of northern anchovy and Pacific sardine collected from this area and analyzed by CDPH laboratories. A table presenting the results of domoic acid analysis in samples 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.

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

Northern Anchovy and Pacific Sardine Sampling Results from Monterey Bay

Kristina Thayer

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
		7/1/26	Viscera	3	<2.5
		7/10/26	Viscera	10	<2.5
		7/10/26	Whole Body	9	<2.5
		7/23/26	Viscera	12	<2.5

SPECIES	PORT; COLLECTION SITE	SAMPLE COLLECTION DATE	TISSUE TYPE	COMPOSITE SAMPLE SIZE	DOMOIC ACID (ppm) *
Pacific sardine	Monterey; Block 509	7/23/26	Whole Body	13	<2.5
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
	Monterey; Block 509	6/30/26	Viscera	15	13
			Whole Body	13	<2.5
	Monterey; Block 503	7/1/26	Viscera	11	30
			Whole body	13	5

SPECIES	PORT; COLLECTION SITE	SAMPLE COLLECTION DATE	TISSUE TYPE	COMPOSITE SAMPLE SIZE	DOMOIC ACID (ppm) *
Northern anchovy	Monterey; Block 509	7/1/26	Viscera	>20	23
	Monterey; Block 508	7/2/26	Whole Body	>20	7
	Monterey; Block 509	7/7/26	Viscera	10	3.9
			Whole Body	10	<2.5
		7/15/26	Viscera	22	7
			Whole Body	22	<2.5

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

cc: June Weintraub, Sc.D.
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