



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 (Sep 11, 2026 09:43:51 PDT)
for Kristina Thayer

DATE: September 11, 2026

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION TO RESTRICT THE RECREATIONAL TAKE OF
NORTHERN ANCHOVY TO THAT 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 taken from all waters 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 this coastal pelagic species and a regional harmful algal bloom producing domoic acid, recreational take restriction is recommended for waters of the greater Monterey Bay area defined above. OEHHA and CDPH therefore recommend restricting recreational take of Northern anchovy from this area to those anchovies intended for bait use only, and not for human or pet consumption.

This recommendation is based on levels of domoic acid above the federal action level in the viscera and whole bodies of Northern anchovy 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.

Meghan Hertel, Director
September 11, 2026
Page 2

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

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 Sampling Results from Monterey Bay

SPECIES	PORT; COLLECTION SITE	SAMPLE COLLECTION DATE	TISSUE TYPE	COMPOSITE SAMPLE SIZE	DOMOIC ACID (ppm) *
Northern Anchovy	Monterey; Block 509	8/28/26	Viscera	12	1200
			Whole Body	13	190

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

cc: June Weintraub, Sc.D.
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