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CDFW Director closes fishing in Ventura Harbor due to oil spill

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) closed fishing in the Ventura Harbor following an incident in the afternoon of Nov. 18, involving two vessels that resulted in the release of red dye diesel into the harbor.

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) advised CDFW that adequate information is not currently available for OEHHA to determine the potential threat to public health from fishing or shellfish harvesting in the affected area or from consuming fish or shellfish from the area. OEHHA recommends that a fishing and shellfish harvesting closure be initiated for the entire Ventura Harbor to the exterior breakwater boundaries, to include the residential canals to the north, pending receipt of additional information to determine the degree and nature of any potential public health threat posed by the spill. In addition, OEHHA advises that fishers avoid fishing in areas where there is visible sheen on the water.

The closure takes effect immediately and will be lifted once OEHHA determines there is no threat to public health. OEHHA is the science arm of the California Environmental Protection Agency and advises CDFW on the safety of consuming fish during an oil spill.

The US Coast Guard and CDFW responded to the incident that occurred when the commercial fishing vessel Royal Pacific allided with the fishing vessel Golden Eagle while shifting berths, puncturing a fuel tank on the starboard side. The source of the spill was stopped shortly after the incident, but as much as 300 gallons entered the water. The Golden Eagle has been removed from the water and is currently undergoing repairs.

Cleanup operations and investigation into the incident are ongoing. The Oiled Wildlife Care Network has activated two recovery teams to collect oiled animals. Anyone seeing oiled wildlife should report it to 1-877-UCD-OWCN.

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