



**INFORMATION ABOUT EATING FISH FROM THE
CENTRAL AND SOUTH DELTA**
(CONTRA COSTA, SACRAMENTO, SAN JOAQUIN COUNTIES)
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
California Environmental Protection Agency
November 2022

Why did OEHHA update the advisory for eating fish from the Central and South Delta?

OEHHA updated the advisory for the Central and South Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, hereafter referred to as the “Central and South Delta,” because additional information on mercury levels in fish tissue has become available. This advisory supersedes the previous advisory for eating fish from the Central and South Delta and is part of an ongoing effort by OEHHA to provide safe-eating advice for fish from different California water bodies. This advisory includes all water bodies in the Delta south of Highway 12, except the Sacramento River and the San Joaquin River south of Stockton, and includes advice for [fish that migrate](#).¹ The “do-not-consume” advice for all fish and shellfish in the Port of Stockton, based on polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), remains in effect from the previous advisory. Separate advisories are available for the [Sacramento River and Northern Delta](#) for waters north of Highway 12, the [San Joaquin River from Friant Dam to the Port of Stockton](#), and the [Port of Stockton](#).

Why should I eat fish?

- Low-contaminant fish are an important part of a healthy, well-balanced diet. The American Heart Association recommends eating at least two servings of fish each week.
- Fish are a good source of protein and vitamins, and are a primary dietary source of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Eating low-contaminant fish while pregnant may be beneficial to the baby’s brain development.

Which chemicals are of concern for people eating fish from the Central and South Delta?

- Mercury
 - Mercury is a metal that comes from mining, air fallout from burning coal and other fuels, and from natural sources. It is the most commonly found contaminant of concern in fish.
 - Too much methylmercury, the form of mercury found in fish, can harm the brain, especially in fetuses, babies, and children. Mothers can pass methylmercury to their babies during pregnancy.
 - Because fetuses, babies, and children are especially sensitive to mercury, OEHHA has one set of advice for the amount of mercury-containing fish that

¹ Chinook (King) Salmon are not legal to take from the Central and South Delta.

women age 18–49 years and children should eat, and another set of advice for women 50 years and older and men 18 years and older.

- Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)
 - PCBs are industrial chemicals. While banned in the 1970s, they persist for many years in the environment and are still found in fish, sediment, and water as a result of spills, leaks, and improper disposal.
 - PCBs can increase cancer risk. PCBs may also harm the developing fetus, which can include effects on growth and learning. Women can pass PCBs on to their babies during pregnancy and breastfeeding.
 - PCBs can build up to very high levels in the skin, fat, and some internal organs of fish. That is why OEHHA recommends eating only the skinless fillet (meat) of fish.

How did OEHHA determine the consumption guidelines for fish from the Central and South Delta?

- OEHHA compared chemical levels in fish caught from the Central and South Delta to levels that are considered safe for human consumption.
- OEHHA’s consumption guidelines balance the health benefits of fish consumption and the risks from the contaminants.

What does OEHHA recommend for people who want to eat fish from the Central and South Delta?

- OEHHA recommends the types and amounts of fish that may be eaten each week as “servings.” A serving is about the size and thickness of your hand for fish fillets. Give children smaller servings. For smaller fish species, several individual fish may be required to yield a serving.
- Women 18–49 years and children 1–17 years
 - Should not eat any fish or shellfish from the Port of Stockton, Striped Bass, or White Sturgeon.
 - May eat:
 - 1 total serving per week of black bass species, catfish species, Common Carp, crappie species, Goldfish, or Sacramento Sucker, or
 - 2 total servings per week of American Shad, Steelhead Trout, or sunfish species, or
 - 3 total servings per week of bullhead species, or
 - 7 total servings per week of small baitfish species (including Bigscale Logperch, Golden Shiner, Inland Silverside, Mississippi Silverside, Mosquitofish, Prickly Sculpin, Shimofuri Goby, Threadfin Shad, and Yellowfin Goby).

- Women 50 years and older and men age 18 years and older
 - Should not eat any fish or shellfish from the Port of Stockton
 - May eat:
 - 1 total serving per week of Striped Bass or White Sturgeon, or
 - 2 total servings per week of black bass species or Sacramento Sucker, or
 - 3 total servings per week of catfish species, Common Carp, crappie species, or Goldfish, or
 - 5 total servings per week of Steelhead Trout, or
 - 7 total servings per week of American Shad, bullhead species, sunfish species, or small baitfish species (as listed above).
- For additional fish species found in the Central and South Delta that are legal to take and not included in this advisory, OEHHA recommends following the [Statewide Advisory for Eating Fish from California's Rivers, Streams, and Creeks without site-specific advice](#).

What else can I do to protect my health and the health of my family?

- Eat a variety of fish.
- Eat smaller (younger) fish of legal size.
- Eat only the skinless fillet or meat portion of fish.
- Thoroughly cook the fish and allow the juice to drain away.
- Learn about OEHHA's guidelines for eating sport fish in California:
 - Visit <https://oehha.ca.gov/fish/advisories>, or call OEHHA at (916) 324-7572 or (510) 622-3170
 - Check the Freshwater or Ocean Sport Fishing Regulations booklets from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, or visit <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Regulations>



Women
(18 – 49 Years)

Children
(1 – 17 Years)

7 TOTAL
SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

3 TOTAL
SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

2 TOTAL
SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

1 TOTAL
SERVING
A WEEK

0 DO NOT
EAT



California Office of
Environmental Health
Hazard Assessment

web www.oehha.ca.gov/fish
email fish@oehha.ca.gov
phone (916) 324-7572

A GUIDE TO EATING FISH *from the* CENTRAL AND SOUTH DELTA

Includes all water bodies in the Delta south of Highway 12,
except the Sacramento River and the San Joaquin River
south of Stockton

(CONTRA COSTA, SACRAMENTO AND SAN JOAQUIN COUNTIES)

WOMEN 18 – 49 YEARS AND CHILDREN 1 – 17 YEARS

Eat the Good Fish

Eating fish that are
low in chemicals
may provide health
benefits to children
and adults.



Avoid the Bad Fish

Eating fish with higher
levels of chemicals like
mercury or PCBs may
cause health problems
in children and adults.



Choose the Right Fish

Chemicals may
be more harmful
to unborn babies
and children.



Small Baitfish Species
See report for list of species



Bullhead Species



American Shad
♥ high in omega-3s



Steelhead Trout
♥ high in omega-3s



Sunfish Species



Black Bass Species
♥ high in omega-3s



Catfish Species



Common Carp



Crappie Species



Goldfish



Sacramento Sucker



Striped Bass

All fish or shellfish from
the Port of Stockton



White Sturgeon

Serving Size

A serving of fish is
about the size and
thickness of your
hand. Give children
smaller servings.

For Adults



For Children



Eat only the skinless fillet



Some chemicals are higher in the skin, fat, and guts.

Eat only the meat



Updated 11/2022



Women
(50+ Years)

Men
(18+ Years)

7 TOTAL SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

5 TOTAL SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

3 TOTAL SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

2 TOTAL SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

1 TOTAL SERVING
A WEEK

0 DO NOT
EAT

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**WOMEN 50 YEARS AND OLDER AND
MEN 18 YEARS AND OLDER**

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Eating fish that are low in chemicals may provide health benefits to children and adults.



Avoid the Bad Fish
Eating fish with higher levels of chemicals like mercury or PCBs may cause health problems in children and adults.



Choose the Right Fish
Chemicals may be more harmful to unborn babies and children.



American Shad
high in omega-3s



Bullhead Species



Small Baitfish Species
See report for list of species



Sunfish Species



Steelhead Trout
high in omega-3s



Catfish Species



Common Carp



Crappie Species



Goldfish



Black Bass Species
high in omega-3s



Sacramento Sucker



Striped Bass
high in omega-3s



White Sturgeon

All fish or shellfish from
the Port of Stockton

Serving Size

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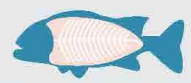
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