



## Press Release

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### **Fish Advisory for San Bernardino County's Lake Havasu Offers Safe Eating Advice for Black Bass Species, Striped Bass, Catfish and Other Fish Species**

SACRAMENTO – A new state fish advisory issued today provides safe eating advice for five species of fish from [Lake Havasu](#) in San Bernardino County, located on the border between California and Arizona.

The California Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) developed the recommendations based on the levels of mercury and selenium measured in fish collected from Lake Havasu.

The fish species tested at Lake Havasu had lower contaminant levels than is typical at many other California water bodies. All species tested can be eaten at least twice a week.

"Eating fish low in chemical contaminants—like the fish from Lake Havasu covered by these guidelines—can help reduce the risk of heart disease and provide an excellent source of protein," said Dr. Lauren Zeise, director of OEHHA. "These guidelines are designed to balance the health benefits of eating fish against the risks from exposure to chemicals in fish caught from the lake."

When consuming fish from Lake Havasu, women ages 18-45 and children ages 1-17 may safely eat four servings per week of carp, or three servings per week of catfish or sunfish species, or two servings per week of black bass species or Striped Bass.

Women age 46 and older and men age 18 and older may safely eat seven servings per week of catfish, or four servings per week of black bass species or carp, or three servings per week of sunfish species, or two servings per week of Striped Bass from the lake.

One serving is eight ounces prior to cooking, which for fish fillets is roughly the size and thickness of your hand. Children should be given smaller servings. To avoid contaminants that can build up in the skin, fat, and some internal organs, eat only skinless fillet (meat) of fish.

Mercury is a naturally occurring metal that is released into the environment from mining and burning coal, and accumulates in fish in the form of methylmercury. Methylmercury can damage the brain and nervous system, especially in developing children and fetuses.

Selenium is an essential nutrient in small amounts, but high levels of selenium can cause health problems, including hair loss, gastrointestinal distress, and tremors.

Eating fish in amounts slightly greater than the advisory's recommendations is not likely to cause health problems if it is done occasionally, such as eating fish caught during an annual vacation.

The health advisory and eating advice for Lake Havasu – as well as eating guidelines for other fish species and California bodies of water – are available at <http://www.oehha.ca.gov/fish/advisories>. Pictorial versions of the fish consumption advice is also available on that page in both English and Spanish.

The Lake Havasu recommendations join more than 80 other OEHHA advisories that provide site-specific, health-based fish consumption advice for many of the places where people catch and eat fish in California, including lakes, rivers, bays, reservoirs, and the California coast. OEHHA also has statewide fish advisories for coastal locations without site-specific advice; lakes and reservoirs without site-specific advice; and fish that migrate up rivers from the sea to breed.

OEHHA is the primary state entity for the assessment of risks posed by chemical contaminants in the environment. Its mission is to protect and enhance public health and the environment by scientific evaluation of risks posed by hazardous substances.

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