



Press Release

California Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
Lauren Zeise, PhD, Director

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Contact:
Sam Delson (916) 324-0955 (O)
(916) 764-0955 (C)

Fish Advisory for the Russian River Offers Safe Eating Advice for Seven Fish Species

SACRAMENTO – A state fish advisory issued today for the [Russian River](#) in Sonoma and Mendocino counties provides safe eating advice for black bass species, Sacramento Pikeminnow, Sacramento Sucker, sculpin, sunfish species, Threespine Stickleback, and Tule Perch.

The California Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) developed the recommendations based on the levels of mercury found in fish caught from the river.

“Many fish have nutrients that may reduce the risk of heart disease and are excellent sources of protein,” said Dr. Lauren Zeise, director of OEHHA. “By following our guidelines for fish caught in the Russian River, people can safely eat fish low in chemical contaminants and enjoy the well-known health benefits of fish consumption.”

The advisory covers the entire 110-mile length of the Russian River from Willits, a town about 20 miles north-northwest of Ukiah, to the Pacific Ocean at Jenner.

This advisory does not include other flowing waters or reservoirs in the Russian River watershed. Site-specific advice is available for [Laguna de Santa Rosa](#), a major tributary of the Russian River, and two reservoirs in the Russian River watershed, [Lake Mendocino](#) and [Lake Sonoma](#).

When consuming fish from the Russian River, women ages 18-49 and children ages 1-17 should not eat black bass species, Sacramento Pikeminnow, or Sacramento Sucker. They may safely eat a maximum of two total servings per week of Threespine Stickleback, or one serving per week of sculpin, sunfish species, or Tule Perch.

Women ages 50 and older and men ages 18 and older should not eat black bass species or Sacramento Pikeminnow from the Russian River. They may safely eat a maximum of five total servings per week of Threespine Stickleback, or two servings per week of sculpin, sunfish species, or Tule Perch, or one serving per week of Sacramento Sucker.

One serving is an eight-ounce fish fillet, measured prior to cooking, which is roughly the size and thickness of your hand. Children should be given smaller servings. For small fish species, several individual fish may make up a single serving.

A poster with the safe-eating advice for the [Russian River](#) is available on OEHHA's website in both English and Spanish. For fish species found in the Russian River that are not included in this advisory, OEHHA recommends following the [statewide advisory for eating fish that migrate](#).

Mercury is a naturally occurring metal that is released into the environment from mining and burning coal. It accumulates in fish in the form of methylmercury, which can damage the brain and nervous system, especially in developing children and fetuses. Because of this, OEHHA provides a separate set of recommendations specifically for children up to age 17, and women of childbearing age (18-49 years).

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 Russian River advisory recommendations join more than 100 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.

The advisory for the Russian River, along with safe eating guidelines for fish from more than 100 other California bodies of water, is available on OEHHA's [Fish Advisories webpage](#).

OEHHA's mission is to protect and enhance the health of Californians and our state's environment through scientific evaluations that inform, support, and guide regulatory and other actions.

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