OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH HAZARD ASSESSMENT

GOOD CATCH CALIFORNIA
Your Fish Advisor

Health Advisory and Guidelines for Eating Fish from the Russian River (Sonoma and Mendocino Counties)

May 2019

Fish, Ecotoxicology, and Water Section
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Developing fish consumption advisories depends on sampling and analysis of fish. The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment acknowledges the contribution of information from the following entities: the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and its analytical resources, the Moss Landing Marine Laboratories and the Water Pollution Control Laboratory. OEHHA would like to thank Rich Fadness of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board for supporting sampling and analysis of fish for the Russian River Advisory. Data were obtained from the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (http://ceden.waterboards.ca.gov/AdvancedQueryTool). The map was created using ArcMap (10.5) from the Environmental Systems Resource Institute (ESRI, Redlands, California).

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ATL	Advisory Tissue Level
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
DDT(s)	dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) and its metabolites dichlorodiphenyldichloroethane (DDD) and dichlorodiphenyldichloroethylene (DDE)
DHA	docosahexaenoic acid
EPA	eicosapentaenoic acid
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
Hg	mercury
MDL	method detection limit
MLML	Moss Landing Marine Laboratories
mm	millimeters
OEHHA	Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
PBDEs	polybrominated diphenyl ethers
PCBs	polychlorinated biphenyls
ppb	parts per billion
RL	reporting limit
RWB1	Regional Water Board 1 (North Coast)
Se	selenium
SWAMP	Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TSMP	Toxic Substances Monitoring Program
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDHHS	United States Department of Health and Human Services
US EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency

PREFACE

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), a department in the California Environmental Protection Agency, is responsible for evaluating potential public health risks from chemical contamination of sport fish. This includes issuing fish consumption advisories, when appropriate, for the State of California. OEHHA's authorities to conduct these activities are based on mandates in the:

- California Health and Safety Code
  - Section 59009, to protect public health
  - Section 59011, to advise local health authorities
- California Water Code
  - Section 13177.5, to issue health advisories

The health advisories are published in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Sport Fishing Regulations in the section on public health advisories.

This report presents guidelines for eating fish from the Russian River in Sonoma and Mendocino counties. The report provides background information and a technical description of how the guidelines were developed. The resulting advice is summarized in the illustrations after the Table of Contents and List of Figures and Tables.

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(18-49 Years)
Children
(1-17 Years)
2 TOTAL SERVINGS A WEEK
OR
1 TOTAL SERVING A WEEK
0 DO NOT EAT
0 DO NOT EAT
Women
(50+ Years)
Men
(18+ Years)
5 TOTAL SERVINGS A WEEK
OR
2 TOTAL SERVINGS A WEEK
OR
1 TOTAL SERVING A WEEK
0 DO NOT EAT
A GUIDE TO EATING FISH from the RUSSIAN RIVER
(SONOMA AND MENDOCINO COUNTIES)
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.
Threespine Stickleback
photo credit: Ken-ichi Ueda, inaturalist.org
Sculpin
Sunfish Species
Tule Perch
Sacramento Sucker
Black Bass Species
Sacramento Pikeminnow
Serving Size
A serving of fish is about the size and thickness of your hand. Give children smaller servings.
For Adults
For Children
California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
web www.oehha.ca.gov/fish
email fish@oehha.ca.gov
phone (916) 324-7572
Eat only the skinless fillet
Eat only the meat
Some chemicals are higher in the skin, fat, and guts.

INTRODUCTION

This report presents guidelines for eating fish from the Russian River (Figure 1) in Sonoma and Mendocino counties, in northern California.

LOCATION

The Russian River headwaters are located near the town of Willits, about 20 miles north-northwest of Ukiah. The river then flows south to Forestville, where it changes course and runs west to drain into the Pacific Ocean, at Jenner. The river flows for 110 miles through a watershed of approximately 1500 square miles[1]. This advisory only applies to the Russian River and does not include other flowing waters or reservoirs in the Russian River watershed. Site-specific advice has previously been developed 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.

FIGURE 1. LOCATION OF THE RUSSIAN RIVER

[1] Information regarding the Russian River was obtained from the Russian Riverkeeper. Online at: https://russianriverkeeper.org/about-the-russian-river/

APPROACH USED

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) used the results from two monitoring studies described in this report to develop the Russian River Advisory. OEHHA uses the following general process in developing consumption advice for sport fish:

1) Evaluation of all fish contaminant data available from a water body and selection of appropriate data that meet data quality criteria and sampling plan guidelines.
2) Determination of fish species for which adequate data are available to issue fish consumption advice.
3) Calculation of an appropriate measure of central tendency (often a weighted arithmetic mean[2]) and other descriptive statistics of the contaminant data, as appropriate, for a chemical of potential concern for the selected fish species.
4) Comparison of the chemical concentrations with the OEHHA Advisory Tissue Levels (ATLs) for each chemical of potential concern.
5) Development of final advice based on a thorough review of the data and best professional judgment relating to the benefits and risks of consuming a particular fish species.

The ATLs (discussed further in a subsequent section of this report) are chemical levels in fish tissue that are considered acceptable, based on chemical toxicity, for a range of consumption rates. Development of the ATLs also included consideration of health benefits associated with including fish in the diet (OEHHA, 2008). The ATLs should not be interpreted as static "bright lines," but one component of a complex process of data evaluation and interpretation used by OEHHA in the assessment and communication of the benefits and risks of consuming sport fish.

CHEMICALS OF POTENTIAL CONCERN

Certain chemicals are considered to be of potential concern for people who eat fish because of their toxicity and their ability to accumulate in fish tissue. The majority of fish consumption advisories in California are issued because of mercury (Hg), followed by polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and, in a few cases, selenium (Se) or some legacy pesticides (pesticides that are no longer used but remain in the environment).

Mercury is a natural element found in some rock and soil. Human activities, such as burning coal and the historic use of mercury to mine gold, also add mercury to the environment. If mercury enters waterways, it can be converted to a more toxic form

[2] Means are an arithmetic average of individual values and/or a weighted average of composites. A weighted average of composites is calculated by multiplying the chemical concentration in each composite by the number of fish in that composite for each species. Products are then summed and divided by the total number of fish in all composites for that species, combined.

known as methylmercury – which can pass into and build up in fish. High levels of methylmercury can harm the brain, especially in fetuses and children.

PCBs are industrial chemicals previously used in electrical transformers, plastics, and lubricating oils, often as flame retardants or electrical insulators. Their use was banned in the 1970s, but they persist in the environment because they do not break down easily and can accumulate in fish. Depending on the exposure level, PCBs may cause cancer or other health effects, including neurotoxicity, in humans.

Selenium is a naturally occurring metalloid and at low doses is an essential nutrient for many important human health processes, including thyroid regulation and vitamin C metabolism. Higher doses cause selenium toxicity, which can include symptoms ranging from hair loss and gastrointestinal distress to dizziness and tremors.

Chlordanes, dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT), and dieldrin are pesticides that were banned from use in 1973 (DDT), the late 1980s (chlordanes and dieldrin) and 1990 (toxaphene), but are still found in some fish in certain California water bodies. Depending on the exposure level, these chemicals may cause cancer or adverse effects on the nervous system.

Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) are a class of flame retardants historically used in a variety of consumer products including furniture, textiles, automotive parts, and electronics. The use of PBDEs in new products was largely phased out by 2013 but, due to their wide usage and persistence in the environment, they are still being detected in fish tissues. PBDEs may affect hormone levels or learning and behavior in children.

Detailed discussion of the toxicity of these chemicals and references are presented in “Development of Fish Contaminant Goals and Advisory Tissue Levels for Common Contaminants in California Sport Fish: Chlordane, DDTs, dieldrin, methylmercury, PCBs, selenium, and toxaphene” (OEHHA, 2008) and “Development of Fish Contaminant Goals and Advisory Tissue Levels for Common Contaminants in California Sport Fish: Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers (PBDEs)” (OEHHA, 2011).

All fish species collected from the Russian River and used in advisory development were analyzed for mercury (as a measure of methylmercury). Largemouth Bass, Sacramento Pikeminnow, and Sacramento Sucker were additionally analyzed for PBDEs, PCBs, and the legacy pesticides chlordanes (cis-chlordane, trans-chlordane, cis-nonachlor, trans-nonachlor, and oxychlordane), dieldrin, and DDTs (DDT and its metabolites dichlorodiphenyldichloroethane [DDD] and dichlorodiphenyldichloroethylene [DDE]). Bluegill, Sacramento Pikeminnow, Sacramento Sucker, and sculpin were further analyzed for selenium. Fish species that do not normally accumulate PCBs or other organic chemicals may not be analyzed for those contaminants in a particular monitoring study. Additionally, some studies do not analyze these chemicals and instead focus only on mercury.

DATA SOURCES

The guidelines for eating fish from the Russian River are based on the chemicals detected in the fish collected for the two monitoring studies described below. These studies met OEHHA's data quality criteria, including adequate documentation of sample collection, fish preparation methods (e.g., skinning or filleting), chemical analyses, quality assurance, and sufficiently low detection limits. "Sample," as used in this report, refers to an individual fish or a composite of multiple fish for which contaminant data were reported. "Sampling" or "sampled" refers to the act of collecting fish for chemical analysis.

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWB1)

The Region 1 Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWB1), in cooperation with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), monitors water quality in California's surface waters. In 2015, RWB1 staff collected Largemouth Bass, Sacramento Pikeminnow, Sacramento Sucker, Smallmouth Bass, Threespine Stickleback, and Tule Perch from the Russian River to analyze for levels of mercury. Largemouth Bass, Sacramento Pikeminnow, and Sacramento Sucker were also analyzed for chlordanes, DDTs, dieldrin, PBDEs, and PCBs.[3]

Toxic Substances Monitoring Program (TSMP)

The TSMP (1976-2003) was a state water quality-monitoring program managed by the SWRCB (SWRCB, 2007 and 2013). Its objective was to provide statewide information on the occurrence of toxic substances by monitoring water bodies with known or suspected water quality impairment. Staff from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), then known as the Department of Fish and Game, collected Bluegill, Green Sunfish, Sacramento Pikeminnow, Sacramento Sucker, and sculpin from the Russian River between 1979 and 1997, as part of the program. Fish samples were analyzed for mercury and/or selenium.

FISH SAMPLED FROM THE RUSSIAN RIVER

The fish sampling data used in this advisory were retrieved from the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN), the state's repository for environmental data. Samples were excluded when the fish were not legal size to take or did not meet OEHHA's criteria for minimum "edible" size based on species size at maturity, and professional judgment (as described in OEHHA, 2005). A summary of all fish species evaluated for this advisory is shown in Table 1, including the name of the

[3] Information about the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board can be found online at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/

species, number of samples collected, total number of fish, project name, year sampled, and contaminants analyzed.

TABLE 1. FISH SAMPLES EVALUATED FOR THE RUSSIAN RIVER ADVISORY

Common Name	Scientific Name	Number of Samples	Total Number of Fish	Project	Year Collected	Contaminants Analyzed
Bluegill	*Lepomis macrochirus*	5	55	TSMP[a,c]	1989-1997	Hg
		4	47	TSMP[a,c]	1989-1997	Se
Green Sunfish	*Lepomis cyanellus*	2	22	TSMP[a,c]	1979-1980	Hg
Largemouth Bass	*Micropterus salmoides*	1	5	RWB1	2015	Chlordanes, DDTs, Dieldrin, PBDEs, PCBs
		5	5	RWB1	2015	Hg
Sacramento Pikeminnow	*Ptychocheilus grandis*	4	20	RWB1	2015	Chlordanes, DDTs, Dieldrin, Hg, PBDEs, PCBs
		1	9	TSMP[a,c,d]	1992	Se
Sacramento Sucker	*Catostomus occidentalis*	5	25	RWB1	2015	Chlordanes, DDTs, Dieldrin, Hg, PBDEs, PCBs
		1	5	TSMP[a,c]	1997	Hg, Se
Sculpin	*Cottus spp.*	3	37	TSMP[a,b,c]	1991-1994	Hg, Se
Smallmouth Bass	*Micropterus dolomieu*	5	5	RWB1	2015	Hg
Threespine Stickleback	*Gasterosteus aculeatus*	1	10	RWB1[b]	2015	Hg
Tule Perch	*Hysterocarpus traskii*	4	40	RWB1[b]	2015	Hg

[a]Study report did not specify whether skin was removed from fillets prior to tissue analysis.
[b] Samples were analyzed as whole organisms, including head, skin, internal organs, muscle, and bones.
[c]Organic data (chlordanes, DDTs, dieldrin, PCBs or toxaphene) generated prior to 2000 were excluded from the analysis because more recent data are considered more reliable due to improved analytical methods.
[d] This sample was also analyzed for mercury; however, the result was omitted because it was considered likely to be a reporting error (0 ppb versus values ranging from 1150 to 2150 ppb in other Sacramento Pikeminnow samples).

CHEMICAL CONCENTRATIONS

As shown in Table 1, samples were analyzed for one or more of the following: total mercury, selenium, chlordanes, DDTs, dieldrin, PBDEs, and PCBs (51 congeners[4]). Among the chemicals analyzed in fish tissue samples from the Russian River, only mercury levels were sufficiently high to impact consumption advice. All fish samples were prepared as fillets, except for sculpin, Threespine Stickleback, and Tule Perch, which were analyzed as whole bodies due to their small size. Where reported, all fish samples were prepared skinless; however, this was not recorded for samples collected by TSMP. Samples were analyzed as individual fish or composites.

For this advisory, OEHHA used the weighted (by the number of individual fish) arithmetic mean (average) of the chemical concentrations (in wet weight) for each fish species to estimate average human exposure.

MERCURY

Samples were analyzed for total mercury, as either individual fish or composite samples, using a direct mercury analyzer (DMA) at the CDFW Moss Landing Marine Laboratories (MLML). The DMA method utilizes thermal decomposition and atomic absorption. OEHHA assumed all mercury detected was methylmercury, which is the most common form found in fish and is also the more toxic form (Bloom, 1992). Table 2 shows the averages and ranges for total length[5], as well as mercury concentrations in each fish species. The DMA method detection limit (MDL)[6] and the reporting limit (RL)[7] for total mercury were reported at 4 and 12 parts per billion (ppb), respectively. Although mercury was detected at commonly found concentrations in the TSMP study, the MDL and RL for mercury were not reported.

PCBS, PBDES, AND PESTICIDES

Some composite samples were analyzed for PCBs, PBDEs, and the legacy pesticides (chlordanes, DDTs, and dieldrin). Pesticides, PBDEs and PCBs were analyzed by gas chromatography at the CDFW Water Pollution Control Laboratory. For chlordanes, DDTs, PCBs, and PBDEs, each of the concentrations presented was the sum of the detected parent compound, congeners, or metabolites, where applicable. Since the MDLs or RLs were relatively low (≤ 5 ppb), individual congeners or metabolites with concentrations reported as non-detects were assumed to be zero. This is a standard method of handling non-detect values for PCBs and other chemicals with multiple

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[4] Congeners are related compounds with similar chemical forms. Of the 209 possible PCB congeners, 54-55 are generally reported.
[5] Total length is the maximum length of the fish, measured from the tip of the closed mouth to the tip of the pinched tail fin.
[6] The MDL is the lowest quantity of a chemical that can be distinguished (as greater than zero) in a sample.
[7] The RL is the lowest quantity of a chemical that can be accurately quantified in a sample.

congeners or metabolites in a given sample when detection levels are adequate (US EPA, 2000a).

SELENIUM

The CDFW MLML analyzed species collected from the Russian River for selenium, as composite samples, using inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometry (ICP-MS). The ICP-MS method utilizes desolvation, atomization, and ionization with ion separation based on a mass-to-charge ratio to detect the total selenium concentration in a sample. The ICP-MS method detection limit (MDL) and the reporting limit (RL) for total selenium were not reported by the TSMP study.

Concentrations of chlordanes, dieldrin, DDTs, PBDEs, PCBs, and selenium were lower than the corresponding ATL threshold values for daily consumption (OEHHA, 2008 and 2011). These chemicals were therefore not considered further for developing consumption advice and are not shown in this report.

TABLE 2. MERCURY CONCENTRATIONS IN FISH FROM THE RUSSIAN RIVER

Species from Russian River	Number of Samples	Total Number of Fish	Mean** Total Length (mm)	Range of Total Lengths*** (mm)	Mercury (ppb)	
					Mean**	Range***
Black Bass Species	10	10	339	306-414	1164	464-1590
Largemouth Bass	5	5	334	306-354	1448	1150-1590
Smallmouth Bass	5	5	343	306-414	879	464-1460
Sacramento Pikeminnow	4	20	410	344-495	1498	1150-2150
Sacramento Sucker	6	30	403	263-495	589	155-910
Sculpin spp.	3	37	78*	74-82*	259	220-290
Sunfish Species	7	77	113	106-130	305	107-400
Bluegill	5	55	115	106-130	310	107-400
Green Sunfish	2	22	108	106-110	295	240-360
Threespine Stickleback	1	10	48	40-56	119	n/a
Tule Perch	4	40	80	65-95	274	125-505

*Lengths were reported as fork length
**Means are an arithmetic average of individual values and/or a weighted average of composites.
***Range of individuals and/or range of the composites.
n/a = not applicable due to a single sample

DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDELINES FOR EATING FISH FROM THE RUSSIAN RIVER

The OEHHA fish advisory process considers the health benefits of fish consumption as well as the risk from exposure to the chemical contaminants found in fish. Benefits are included in the advisory process because there is considerable evidence and scientific consensus that fish should be part of a healthy, well-balanced diet. Fish contain many nutrients that are important for general health and, in particular, help promote optimal growth and development of babies and young children, and may reduce the incidence of heart disease in adults (FDA/US EPA, 2017; American Heart Association, 2016; OEHHA, 2008; Institute of Medicine, 2007; Kris-Etherton et al., 2002). Fish are a significant source of the specific omega-3 fatty acids, docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), thought to be associated with these beneficial health effects (USDA/USDHHS, 2015; Weaver et al., 2008).

The 2015-2020 US Dietary Guidelines recommend that 1) the general population "consume eight or more ounces per week (less for young children)" of a variety of seafood[8] "for the total package of nutrients that seafood provides, including its EPA and DHA content" and 2) "women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should consume at least eight and up to twelve ounces of a variety of seafood per week from choices that are lower in methylmercury" (USDA/USDHHS, 2015). The particular fish that people eat is an important factor in determining the net beneficial effects of fish consumption. For example, studies have shown that children of mothers who ate low-mercury fish during pregnancy scored better on cognitive tests compared to children of mothers who did not eat fish or ate high-mercury fish (Oken et al., 2005 and 2008). Accordingly, because of the high mercury content of certain fish species, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the US EPA recommend that women who are pregnant (or might become pregnant) or breastfeeding, and young children avoid consuming shark, swordfish, tilefish (Gulf of Mexico), bigeye tuna, marlin, orange roughy, and king mackerel (FDA/US EPA, 2017).

In order to address the potential health concerns associated with exposure to contaminants in sport fish, OEHHA has established ATLs for chemicals that are known to accumulate in the edible tissues of fish. ATLs consider both the toxicity of the chemical and potential benefits of eating fish. OEHHA uses the ATLs to determine the maximum number of servings per week that consumers can eat, for each species and at each location, to limit their exposure to these contaminants. Consumers can use OEHHA's guidance when choosing which fish and how much to eat as part of an overall healthy diet.

There are two sets of ATLs for methylmercury in fish because of the age-related toxicity of this chemical (OEHHA, 2008). The fetus and children are more sensitive to the toxic

[8] "Marine animals that live in the sea and in freshwater lakes and rivers. Seafood includes fish, such as salmon, tuna, trout, and tilapia, and shellfish, such as shrimp, crab, and oysters" (USDHHS/USDA, 2015).

effects of methylmercury. Thus, the ATLs for the sensitive population, including women who might become pregnant (typically 18 to 49 years of age) and children 1-17 years, are lower than those for women 50 years and older, and men 18 years and older. The lower ATL values for the sensitive population provide additional protection to allow for normal growth and development of the brain and nervous system of unborn babies and children. Detailed discussion about the toxicity of common fish contaminants and health benefits of fish consumption, as well as derivation of the ATLs, are provided in "Development of Fish Contaminant Goals and Advisory Tissue Levels for Common Contaminants in California Sport Fish: Chlordane, DDTs, dieldrin, methylmercury, PCBs, selenium, and toxaphene" (OEHHA, 2008) and "Development of Fish Contaminant Goals and Advisory Tissue Levels for Common Contaminants in California Sport Fish: Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers (PBDEs)" (OEHHA, 2011). A list of the ATLs used in this report is presented in Appendix I.

For each fish species in this advisory, OEHHA compared the mean chemical concentrations detected in the fillet to the corresponding ATLs to establish the maximum number of servings per week that could be consumed (see Appendix I). A serving size is considered to be 8 ounces, prior to cooking, or about the size and thickness of a hand for fish fillets. Children should be given smaller servings. For smaller fish species, several individuals may be required to yield a serving.

The consumption advice for a fish species is initially based on the chemical with the lowest allowable number of servings per week. Because some chemicals, such as mercury and PCBs, are known to have similar adverse effects, additivity of toxicity is assumed in such cases and may be assessed using multiple chemical exposure methodology (US EPA, 1989 and 2000b). If two or more chemicals with similar adverse effects are present in fish tissue at levels above the corresponding ATL values for daily consumption, multiple chemical exposure methodology is employed. This may result in advising the sensitive population to consume fewer meals per week than would be the case for the presence of one chemical alone, in a similar concentration. The potential effect of multiple chemical exposures (mercury and PCBs) was not assessed because the level of PCBs for all species where data were available were below the corresponding ATL value for daily consumption. Advice for other species in this advisory was based solely on mercury concentrations.

OEHHA recommends that individuals strive to meet the US Dietary Guidelines seafood consumption recommendations, while also adhering to federal and OEHHA recommendations to limit the consumption of fish with higher contaminant levels. The advice discussed in the following section represents the maximum recommended number of servings per week for different fish species. People should eat no more than the recommended number of servings for each fish species or species group. OEHHA's consumption advice for a particular fish species can be extended to other closely related fish species[9] known to accumulate similar levels of contaminants.

[9] Fish species within the same genus are most closely related, and family is the next level of relationship.

Consumption advice should not be combined. That is, if a person chooses to eat a fish from the “one-serving-a-week’’ category, then they should not eat any other fish from any source (including commercial) until the next week. If a person chooses to eat a fish from the “two-servings-per-week” category, they can combine fish species from that category, or eat one fish from that category and one from a category that recommends more than two-servings-per-week (if available), for a total of two servings in that week. Then they should not eat any other fish from any source (including commercial) until the following week.

CONSUMPTION ADVICE FOR FISH FROM THE RUSSIAN RIVER

OEHHA’s advisory protocol requires at least nine fish of a species to be collected from a water body before an advisory can be developed for the primary contaminant of concern. This is to ensure the sample dataset is representative of the fish species population in the water body. In some cases, an exception is made for species that are commonly caught and consumed from a given water body but where available data may be limited. For the Russian River, the sample size criterion was met for the following species: black bass species, sculpin, Sacramento Pikeminnow, Sacramento Sucker, sunfish species, Threespine Stickleback, and Tule Perch. There were not sufficient data to evaluate other species that may be found in this water body. For fish species found in the Russian River that are not included in this advisory, OEHHA recommends following the statewide advisory for fish that migrate.

Black Bass Species (Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass)

The mean mercury concentration in black bass species from the Russian River was 1164 ppb. Mercury concentrations for individual black bass species were 1448 ppb in Largemouth Bass and 879 ppb in Smallmouth Bass. OEHHA recommends no consumption of black bass species for both the sensitive population (women 18 to 49 years and children 1 to 17 years) and the general population (women 50 years and older, and men 18 years and older), based on mercury. Although the mean mercury value did not exceed the 1310 ppb mercury ATL threshold for no consumption for the general population (OEHHA, 2008), OEHHA recommends no consumption of black bass species because the mean value neared, and one-half of individual fish samples exceeded, this threshold. Additionally, an undersized (303 mm) individual Largemouth Bass sample not included in the development of this advisory exceeded both the highest mercury value (1590 ppb) in the black bass species data set of legally-sized fish (305 mm minimum length), and the no consumption ATL threshold by 28% (Hg: 1680 ppb).

OEHHA has evaluated mercury concentrations in black bass species in many water bodies in California and has found a similar range of mercury concentrations when two or more of these species were caught from the same water body. Therefore, OEHHA extends the consumption advice for Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass to other black bass species, including Redeye and Spotted Bass.

SACRAMENTO PIKEMINNOW

The mean mercury concentration in Sacramento Pikeminnow from the Russian River was 1498 ppb. OEHHA recommends no consumption of Sacramento Pikeminnow for both the sensitive population (women 18 to 49 years and children 1 to 17 years) and the general population (women 50 years and older, and men 18 years and older), based on mercury.

SACRAMENTO SUCKER

The mean mercury concentration in Sacramento Sucker from the Russian River was 589 ppb. OEHHA recommends no consumption of Sacramento Sucker for the sensitive population (women 18 to 49 years and children 1 to 17 years), and a maximum of one serving a week for the general population (women 50 years and older, and men 18 years and older), based on mercury.

SCULPIN

The mean mercury concentrations in sculpin from the Russian River was 259 ppb. OEHHA recommends a maximum of one serving a week of sculpin for the sensitive population (women 18 to 49 years and children 1 to 17 years), and a maximum of two servings a week for the general population (women 50 years and older, and men 18 years and older), based on mercury.

SUNFISH SPECIES (BLUEGILL, GREEN SUNFISH)

The mean mercury concentration in sunfish species from the Russian River was 305 ppb. The mercury concentration for individual sunfish species was as follows, Bluegill (310 ppb) and Green Sunfish (295 ppb). Based on the concentration of mercury in these sunfish species, OEHHA recommends a maximum of one serving a week of sunfish species for the sensitive population (women 18 to 49 years and children 1 to 17 years), and a maximum of two servings a week for the general population (women 50 years and older, and men 18 years and older).

OEHHA has evaluated mercury concentrations in sunfish species in many water bodies in California and has found a similar range of mercury concentrations when two or more of these species were caught from the same water body. Therefore, OEHHA extends the consumption advice for sunfish species (Bluegill, Green Sunfish) to other sunfish species, including Pumpkinseed and Redear Sunfish.

THREESPINE STICKLEBACK

The mean mercury concentration in Threespine Stickleback from the Russian River was 119 ppb. Based on the concentration of mercury, OEHHA recommends a maximum of two servings a week of Threespine Stickleback for the sensitive population (women 18

to 49 years and children 1 to 17 years) and a maximum of five servings a week for the general population (women 50 years and older, and men 18 years and older).

TULE PERCH

The mean mercury concentration in Tule Perch from the Russian River was 274 ppb. Based on the concentration of mercury, OEHHA recommends a maximum of one serving a week of Tule Perch for the sensitive population (women 18 to 49 years and children 1 to 17 years) and a maximum of two servings a week for the general population (women 50 years and older, and men 18 years and older).

RECOMMENDED MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SERVINGS

The recommended maximum numbers of servings per week for fish from the Russian River are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3. RECOMMENDED MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SERVINGS PER WEEK FOR FISH FROM THE RUSSIAN RIVER

Fish Species from Russian River	Women 18–49 years and Children 1-17 years	Women 50 years and older and Men 18 years and older
Black Bass Species	0	0
Sacramento Pikeminnow	0	0
Sacramento Sucker	0	1
Sculpin	1	2
Sunfish Species	1	2
Threespine Stickleback	2	5
Tule Perch	1	2

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APPENDIX I. ADVISORY TISSUE LEVELS

Advisory Tissue Levels (ATLs) guide the development of advice for people eating sport fish. ATLs are levels of contaminants found in fish that correspond to the maximum numbers of recommended fish servings. OEHHA uses ATLs to provide advice to prevent consumers from being exposed to:

- More than the average daily reference dose[10] for chemicals not known to cause cancer, such as methylmercury, or
- For cancer-causing chemicals, a risk level greater than one additional cancer case in a population of 10,000 people consuming fish at the given consumption rate over a lifetime. This cancer endpoint is the maximum acceptable risk level recommended by the US EPA (2000b) for fish advisories.

For each chemical, ATLs were determined for both cancer and non-cancer risk, if appropriate, for one to seven eight-ounce servings per week. The most health-protective ATLs for each chemical, selected from either cancer or non-cancer based risk, are shown in the table below for zero to seven servings per week. When the guidelines for eating fish from the Russian River are followed, exposure to chemicals in fish from the Russian River would be at or below the average daily reference dose or the cancer risk probability of one in 10,000.

ADVISORY TISSUE LEVELS FOR SELECTED ANALYTES

Contaminant	Consumption Frequency Categories (8-ounce servings/week)[a] and ATLs (in ppb)							
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Chlordanes	≤ 80	>80-90	>90-110	>110-140	>140-190	>190-280	>280-560	>560
DDTs	≤ 220	>220-260	>260-310	>310-390	>390-520	>520-1,000	>1,000-2,100	>2,100
Dieldrin	≤ 7	>7-8	>8-9	>9-11	>11-15	>15-23	>23-46	>46
MeHg (Women 18-49 and children 1-17)	≤ 31	>31-36	>36-44	>44-55	>55-70	>70-150	>150-440	>440
MeHg (Women > 49 and men)	≤ 94	>94-109	>109-130	>130-160	>160-220	>220-440	>440-1,310	>1,310
PBDEs	≤ 45	>45-52	>52-63	>63-78	>78-100	>100-210	>210-630	>630
PCBs	≤ 9	>9-10	>10-13	>13-16	>16-21	>21-42	>42-120	>120
Selenium	≤ 1000	>1,000-1200	>1,200-1,400	>1,400-1,800	>1,800-2,500	>2,500-4,900	>4,900-15,000	>15,000
Toxaphene	≤ 87	>87-100	>100-120	>120-150	>150-200	>200-300	>300-610	>610

[a] Serving sizes (prior to cooking, wet weight) are based on an average 160-pound person. Individuals weighing less than 160 pounds should eat proportionately smaller amounts.

[10] The reference dose is an estimate of the maximum daily exposure to a chemical likely to be without significant risk of harmful health effects during a lifetime.