

Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment



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Fish Advisory for Ventura County's Lake Piru **Offers Safe Eating Advice for** **Sunfish, Brown Bullhead, and Black Bass**

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SACRAMENTO – A new state fish advisory issued today for Ventura County's Lake Piru, in Los Padres National Forest, offers safe eating advice for three species of fish.

"Fish provide important health benefits and can help reduce the risk of heart disease," said Dr. Lauren Zeise, acting director of the California Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). "They are also an excellent source of protein. These guidelines balance these health benefits against the risks from exposure to mercury in fish."

The recommendations developed by OEHHA for each fish species are based on levels of mercury measured in fish from Lake Piru. Mercury gets into fish through the food they eat. Depending on the exposure level, methylmercury can harm the brain and nervous system of people, especially in fetuses and children as they grow. Mercury is a natural element found in rocks, coal, and soil. Mercury can be released into the environment by mining, volcanic eruptions, and coal-burning activities.

Women aged 18 to 45 and children ages 1 to 17 can safely eat up to two servings per week of sunfish or brown bullhead. They should avoid eating black bass. Women age 46 and older and men age 18 and older can safely eat up to seven servings per week of sunfish or brown bullhead, or one serving per week of black bass.

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

The health advisory and eating advice for Lake Piru – as well as eating guidelines for other fish species and California bodies of water – is available at http://www.oehha.ca.gov/fish/so_cal/index.html. Pictorial fish consumption advice is also available on that page in both English and Spanish.

California Environmental Protection Agency

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www.oehha.ca.gov

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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