

Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment



Matthew Rodriguez
Secretary for
Environmental Protection

George V. Alexeeff, Ph.D., D.A.B.T., Director
Headquarters • 1001 I Street • Sacramento, California 95814
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 4010 • Sacramento, California 95812-4010
Oakland Office • Mailing Address: 1515 Clay Street, 16th Floor • Oakland, California 94612



Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor

Updated State Fish Advisory For Clear Lake Adds Information on Tribal Fish and Shellfish

May 15, 2014
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SAM DELSON 916-324-0955 (o)
916-764-0955 (m)

SACRAMENTO – A new updated state fish advisory for Lake County’s Clear Lake offers safe eating advice on 15 species of fish and shellfish, including several traditional foods and species of interest to a local Indian Tribe.

The advisory and eating guidelines were developed by the California Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). Safe eating guidelines for each of the 15 species of fish and shellfish covered by the advisory can be found in OEHHA’s Clear Lake fact sheet at http://www.oehha.ca.gov/public_info/facts/fClearLakefacts.html.

“Fish are an important part of a healthy and well-balanced diet,” said OEHHA Director Dr. George Alexeeff. “They are an excellent source of protein and can help reduce the risk of heart disease. These guidelines are designed to help people balance these health benefits against the risks from exposure to mercury in fish from Clear Lake.”

The update was developed in response to requests from members of the Big Valley Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians. It provides information on fish and shellfish important to Tribal members and other fish consumers. Newly added species of interest to Tribal members include threadfin shad, prickly sculpin, mosquitofish, inland silversides, winged floater mussels, and Asian clams. The Clear Lake advisory, originally issued in 1987, was last updated in 2009.

The advisory says that consumers of the lake’s fish and shellfish can safely eat Asian clam or winged floater mussel seven servings per week, or women over 45 years old and men can eat seven servings per week of inland silverside or threadfin shad. But women 18 to 45 years old and children should limit silverside or shad to three servings per week. Largemouth bass is the only species for which consumption is not recommended for women 18 to 45 years old and children. Women over 45 years and men can eat one serving of bass per week. The other ten species of fish and shellfish in the Clear Lake advisory can safely be eaten one serving per week by women 18 to 45 years old and children, or three servings per week by women over 45 years and men.

California Environmental Protection Agency

Sacramento: (916) 324-7572 Oakland: (510) 622-3200

www.oehha.ca.gov

The recommendations for each fish species are based on levels of methylmercury. Methylmercury can harm the brain and nervous system of people, especially in fetuses and children as they grow. It gets into fish and shellfish through the food they eat.

The Northern California Coast Range, where Clear Lake is located, is naturally rich in mercury and other ores. In addition, the former Sulphur Bank Mercury Mine, which used to operate on the shore of Clear Lake, has caused mercury contamination of the lake sediments.

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 guidelines for Clear Lake – as well as advisories and eating guidelines for other fish species and California bodies of water – are available at http://www.oehha.ca.gov/fish/so_cal/index.html. A graphic with pictures of fish and shellfish species and the consumption advice is also available.

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.

###