

Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment



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Fish Advisories for the Feather River and Oroville Water Bodies Offer Safe Eating Advice for Variety of Species

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SACRAMENTO – New and updated state fish advisories issued today for the Feather River and Oroville-area water bodies offer safe eating advice on more than a dozen species of fish. The advisories cover the Upper Feather River, Lower Feather River, Thermalito Forebay, and Thermalito Afterbay.

The advisory and eating guidelines were developed by the California Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). Specific safe eating guidelines for each of the many species of fish covered by the advisories can be found in OEHHA's three fact sheets for the Feather River and Oroville-area water bodies. Trout and salmon are among the species that can safely be eaten a few times each week.

"Eating fish provides important health benefits, including reducing the risk of heart disease," said OEHHA Director Dr. George Alexeeff. "They are an excellent source of protein and are an important part of a healthy and well-balanced diet. These guidelines balance these health benefits against the risks from exposure to mercury and PCBs in fish."

The recommendations for each fish species are based on levels of methylmercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The Feather River watershed contains many gold mining sites where mercury was used to extract gold. PCBs were previously used in electric power plants in the Feather River watershed.

Depending on the exposure level, methylmercury can harm the brain and nervous system of people, especially in fetuses and children as they grow. PCBs can cause cancer and other health effects, including nervous system effects, in humans. Mercury and PCBs get into fish through the food they eat.

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

California Environmental Protection Agency

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The health advisories and guidelines for the Feather River and Oroville-area water bodies ([Thermalito Forebay and Thermalito Afterbay](#), the [Lower Feather River Including the Diversion Pool Below Lake Oroville](#), and the [Upper Feather River](#)) – 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. Pictorial fish consumption advice is also available through that page.

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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