



## Press Release

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Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment  
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## **Fish Advisory for Humboldt Bay Offers Safe Eating Advice for Eight Fish Species**

SACRAMENTO – A state fish advisory issued today for [Humboldt Bay](#) in Humboldt County provides safe eating advice for Leopard Shark, Lingcod, Pile Perch, Red Rock Crab, Shiner Perch, Speckled Sanddab, Walleye Surfperch, and White Surfperch.

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

“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 Humboldt Bay, people can safely eat fish low in chemical contaminants and enjoy the well-known health benefits of fish consumption.”

Humboldt Bay is located along California’s northern coast, adjacent to the city of Eureka. The advisory recommends that people of all ages should not eat any Leopard Shark from the bay.

When consuming fish from Humboldt Bay, women ages 18-45 and children ages 1-17 may safely eat a maximum of seven total servings per week of Speckled Sanddab, or two servings per week of Red Rock Crab, Shiner Perch, or White Surfperch, or one serving per week of Lingcod, Pile Perch, or Walleye Surfperch.

Women ages 46 and older and men ages 18 and older may safely eat a maximum of seven total servings per week of Speckled Sanddab, or five servings per week of Shiner Perch or White Surfperch, or four servings per week of Red Rock Crab, or three servings per week of Pile Perch or Walleye Surfperch, or two servings per week of Lingcod.

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.

For fish species found in Humboldt Bay that are not included in this advisory, OEHHA recommends following the [statewide advisory for eating fish from California coastal locations without site-specific advice](#).

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 (18-45 years).

PCBs are a group of industrial chemicals. At high levels of exposure, they can cause health problems, including cancer. Although they were banned in the United States in the late 1970s, PCBs persist in the environment from spills, leaks or improper disposal. PCBs accumulate in the skin, fat, and some internal organs of fish. In order to reduce exposure from PCB contaminated fish, OEHHA recommends eating only the skinless fillet (meat) portion of the fish.

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 Humboldt Bay 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 health advisory and eating advice for Humboldt Bay – as well as eating guidelines for other fish species and California bodies of water – are available on OEHHA's Fish Advisories webpage: <http://www.oehha.ca.gov/fish/advisories>. The [Humboldt Bay](#) poster is available in both English and Spanish.

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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