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SCIENCE FOR A HEALTHY CALIFORNIA

Press Release

California Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
Lauren Zeise, Ph.D., Director

For Immediate Release:
January 20, 2017

Contact:
Sam Delson (916) 324-0955 (O)
(916) 764-0955 (C)

Fish Advisory for Los Angeles County's Castaic Lake and Castaic Lagoon Offers Safe Eating Advice for Black Bass Species, Sunfish Species, Carp, and Channel Catfish

SACRAMENTO – The state issued a new fish advisory today that provides advice for safely eating fish caught in [Castaic Lake](#) and [Castaic Lagoon](#) in northern Los Angeles County: black bass, carp, channel catfish and sunfish.

The California Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) developed its recommendations based on levels of mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) that were measured in fish collected from these water bodies.

"Eating fish low in chemical contaminants can help reduce the risk of heart disease and provide an excellent source of protein," said Dr. Lauren Zeise, director of OEHHA. "These guidelines are designed to balance the health benefits of eating fish against the risks from exposure to chemicals."

When consuming fish from Castaic Lake, women ages 18-45 and children ages 1-17 may safely eat three servings of sunfish species or two servings of carp per week. Women ages 18-45 and children ages 1-17 should not eat Channel Catfish or black bass species. Women age 46 and older and men age 18 and older may safely eat three servings of carp or sunfish species per week, or two servings of black bass species per week, or one serving of Channel Catfish per week.

When consuming fish from Castaic Lagoon, women ages 18-45 and children ages 1-17 may safely eat seven servings of sunfish species per week, or two servings of carp per week, or one serving of black bass species per week. Women age 46 and older and men age 18 and older may safely eat seven servings of sunfish species per week or two servings of black bass species or carp per week.

One serving is eight ounces prior to cooking, which for fish fillets is roughly the size and thickness of your hand. Children should be given smaller servings.

Mercury is a naturally occurring metal that is released into the environment from mining and burning coal and accumulates in fish in the form of methylmercury. Methylmercury

can damage the brain and nervous system, especially in developing children and fetuses.

PCBs are industrial chemicals that were used in electrical equipment. PCB manufacturing in the United States stopped in the late 1970s, but they can still be found in the environment from spills, leaks or improper disposal. PCBs can build up in the body. They can affect the nervous system and can cause cancer and other health effects.

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 health advisory and eating advice for Castaic Lake and Castaic Lagoon – as well as eating guidelines for other fish species and California bodies of water – are available at <http://www.oehha.ca.gov/fish/advisories>. Pictorial versions of the fish consumption advice is also available on that page in both English and Spanish. The Castaic Lake and Castaic Lagoon recommendations join more than 80 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.

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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