




Gavin Newsom, Governor  
Yana Garcia, Secretary for Environmental Protection  
Lauren Zeise, Ph.D., Director

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Charlton H. Bonham, Director  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
715 P Street  
Sacramento, California 95814

**FROM:** Lauren Zeise, Ph.D.   
Director for Lauren Zeise

**DATE:** October 12, 2023

**SUBJECT:** RECOMMENDATION TO OPEN ALL AREAS CLOSED TO  
COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL LOBSTER FISHING IN LOS  
ANGELES AND ORANGE COUNTIES

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The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), in consultation with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), has determined that consumption of lobster taken from state waters off the coast of portions of mainland Los Angeles and Orange counties no longer poses a significant threat for domoic acid exposure. OEHHA, in consultation with CDPH, therefore rescinds the delay of opening recommendations for portions of the commercial and recreational lobster fisheries issued on September 22. This recommendation is based on data from lobsters that were collected from this area and analyzed by CDPH laboratories. A table presenting the results of domoic acid sampling and analysis from the impacted areas is shown below.

Domoic acid poisoning in humans may occur within minutes to hours after consumption of affected seafood and can result in signs and symptoms ranging from vomiting and diarrhea to permanent loss of short-term memory (amnesic shellfish poisoning), coma, or death.

Current federal action levels for domoic acid are  $\geq 20$  parts per million (ppm) for all fish and shellfish, with the exception of  $> 30$  ppm in the viscera of Dungeness crabs.

All sections of the California coast will be open for recreational harvesting of spiny lobster. CDPH and OEHHA continue to strongly recommend that consumers avoid eating the viscera (internal organs, also known as “butter” or “guts”) and roe (reproductive parts) of lobster because they usually contain much higher levels of domoic acid than the meat.

If you have questions, please contact me at [Lauren.Zeise@oehha.ca.gov](mailto:Lauren.Zeise@oehha.ca.gov) or Dr. Wesley Smith at [Wesley.Smith@oehha.ca.gov](mailto:Wesley.Smith@oehha.ca.gov).

### Spiny Lobster Sampling Results

| PORT       | AREA      | SAMPLE COLLECTION DATE | NUMBER OF SAMPLES | TISSUE TYPE | RANGE OF SAMPLE RESULTS (ppm) | AVERAGE DOMOIC ACID LEVEL (ppm) | SAMPLES EXCEEDING ACTION LEVEL* |
|------------|-----------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Long Beach | Block 719 | 08/15/23               | 6                 | Viscera     | < 2.5 – 190                   | 48                              | 67%                             |
|            |           |                        | 3                 | Roe         | 11 – 60                       | 27                              | 33%                             |
|            |           |                        | 4                 | Meat        | 2.7 – 14                      | 6.5                             | 0%                              |
|            |           | 08/31/23               | 6                 | Viscera     | < 2.5 – 31                    | 9.1                             | 17%                             |
|            |           |                        | 2                 | Roe         | 5.1 – 9.2                     | 7.2                             | 0%                              |
|            |           |                        | 2                 | Meat        | < 2.5                         | < 2.5                           | 0%                              |
|            |           | 09/11/23               | 6                 | Viscera     | < 2.5 – 28                    | 9.4                             | 17%                             |
|            |           |                        | 1                 | Roe         | n/a                           | 9.2                             | 0%                              |
|            |           |                        | 2                 | Meat        | < 2.5                         | < 2.5                           | 0%                              |
|            |           | 09/18/23               | 6                 | Viscera     | < 2.5 – 6.6                   | 1.1                             | 0%                              |
|            |           | 09/25/23               | 6                 | Viscera     | < 2.5 – 35                    | 10.5                            | 17%                             |
|            |           |                        | 2                 | Meat        | < 2.5                         | < 2.5                           | 0%                              |

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|------------|------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Long Beach | 719  | 10/2/23                | 6                 | Viscera     | < 2.5 – 13                    | 7.4                             | 0%                              |
|            |      | 10/9/23                | 6                 | Viscera     | < 2.5 – 5.6                   | 0.9                             | 0%                              |

\* The action level for lobster is  $\geq 20$  ppm.

n/a = not applicable due to a single sample

cc: Dr. Miren Klein  
Assistant Deputy Director, Center for Environmental Health  
California Department of Public Health  
1500 Capitol Avenue, Suite 520  
Sacramento, California 95814

Melissa Miller-Henson  
Executive Director  
California Fish and Game Commission  
715 P Street, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, California 95814