




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 Lauren Zeise (Nov 9, 2023 14:32 PST)

**DATE:** November 9, 2023

**SUBJECT:** RECOMMENDATION TO CLOSE THE RECREATIONAL RAZOR CLAM FISHERY IN DEL NORTE COUNTY

---

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), in consultation with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), has determined that consumption of razor clams taken from Del Norte County poses a significant threat for domoic acid exposure. OEHHA, in consultation with CDPH, therefore recommends that the recreational razor clam fishery be closed in Del Norte County. This recommendation is based on a finding of elevated levels of domoic acid in the meat of razor clams that were collected from this area and analyzed by CDPH laboratories, as shown in the table 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 for the viscera of Dungeness crabs.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife, CDPH, and OEHHA will collect, monitor, and analyze razor clams to determine when the recreational razor clam fishery in Del Norte County can be re-opened safely. The Oregon Department of Agriculture also has a closure in place for the recreational razor clam fishery from Cape Blanco to the California border due to elevated domoic acid levels.<sup>1</sup>

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

### Razor Clam Sampling Results

COUNTY	LOCATION	SAMPLE COLLECTION DATE	TISSUE TYPE	DOMOIC ACID (ppm)***
Del Norte	Crescent Beach	10/29/23	Meat*	59
			Meat*	33
			Meat*	49
			Meat**	57

\* Composite sample of four individual clams.

\*\* Composite sample of three individual clams.

\*\*\* The action level for razor clam meat is  $\geq 20$  ppm.

cc: Dr. Miren Klein  
Assistant Deputy Director, Center for Environmental Health  
California Department of Public Health

<sup>1</sup> Oregon Department of Agriculture: Shellfish - Recreational Shellfish Biotxin Closures, online at [https://www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/FoodSafety/Shellfish/Pages/ShellfishClosures.aspx?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/FoodSafety/Shellfish/Pages/ShellfishClosures.aspx?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

Charlton H. Bonham, Director

November 9, 2023

Page 3

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