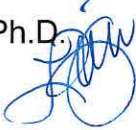




Lauren Zeise, Ph.D., Director
Jared Blumenfeld, Secretary for Environmental Protection
Gavin Newsom, Governor

MEMORANDUM

TO: Charlton H. Bonham, Director
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
1416 Ninth Street, 12th Floor
Sacramento, California 95814

FROM: Lauren Zeise, Ph.D.
Director 

DATE: May 23, 2019

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION TO OPEN THE COMMERCIAL ROCK CRAB
FISHERY IN PORTIONS OF HUMBOLDT COUNTY

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) has determined, in consultation with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), that consumption of rock crab taken from near Cape Mendocino, Humboldt County (40° 30.00' N. Lat.) north to the Humboldt Bay entrance at the north jetty (40° 46.15' N. Lat.) including all ocean waters of Humboldt Bay, does not pose a significant threat for domoic acid exposure. OEHHA and CDPH recommend that this portion of the commercial rock crab fishery be opened. This determination is based on data from sampling of rock crab and analysis of these samples by CDPH laboratories.

OEHHA recommends that the commercial rock crab fishery closure remain in effect in all waters from the Mendocino/Humboldt County line (40° 00.00' N. Lat.) to 40° 30.00' N. Lat. (near Cape Mendocino, Humboldt County) and from the north jetty of the Humboldt Bay entrance (40° 46.15' N. Lat.) to the California/Oregon border (42° 00.00' N. Lat.) until such time as samples show that the closed areas can be opened safely.

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 20 parts per million (ppm) for all fish, with the exception of 30 ppm in the viscera of Dungeness crabs. OEHHA and CDPH are using the 30 ppm action level for rock crab viscera. State and federal laws prohibit the commercial distribution of seafood products that contain domoic acid levels above

the action level. The sampling results for rock crab caught in state waters are provided in the table below.

While the recreational fishery remains open, CDPH and OEHHA strongly recommend that consumers avoid eating the viscera (internal organs, also known as “butter” or “guts”) of lobster or crabs, as the viscera usually contain much higher levels of domoic acid than the meat.

If you have questions, please contact me at Lauren.Zeise@oehha.ca.gov or (916) 322-6325.

Rock Crab Sampling Results

PORT	AREA	SAMPLE COLLECTION DATE	NUMBER OF SAMPLES	VISCERA SAMPLE RESULTS: RANGE	AVERAGE LEVEL IN VISCERA	SAMPLES EXCEEDING ACTION LEVEL*
Eureka	Humboldt Bay	5/6/19	6	<2.5-25 ppm	6.8 ppm	0%
	Cape Mendocino	5/6/19	6	Non-detectable	Non-detectable	0%

* The action level for viscera is 30 ppm