

Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment



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New Fish Advisory For Little Rock Reservoir: Women of Childbearing Age and Children Should Avoid Bass, Catfish, and Carp; Eat Other Species Only in Moderation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SACRAMENTO – A new state fish advisory for fish from Los Angeles County’s Little Rock Reservoir recommends that all women of childbearing age and children should avoid eating largemouth bass, catfish, and carp.

Women of childbearing age and children should also limit consumption of bluegill, green sunfish, crappie, and rainbow trout to one serving a week. Women over 45 and men 18 and older can eat three servings a week of rainbow trout or two servings a week of bluegill, green sunfish, or crappie. Alternately, this group can eat one serving a week of largemouth bass, catfish, or carp.

The recommendations for each of the fish species are based on levels of methylmercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The advisory and eating guidelines were developed by the California Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) using comprehensive data from sampling funded and conducted by the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board.

“Eating fish provides many health benefits,” said OEHHA Director Dr. George Alexeeff. “They are an excellent source of protein and can help reduce the risk of heart disease. These guidelines help anglers and their families balance these health benefits against the risks from exposure to contaminants in fish at Little Rock Reservoir.”

Contamination from mercury and PCBs builds up in fish tissues, but not in water from the reservoir. Drinking water from the reservoir consistently meets or exceeds drinking water standards for both mercury and PCBs.

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Methylmercury can harm the brain and nervous system, especially in fetuses and children as they grow. PCBs 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 a health problem if it is done only occasionally, such as eating fish caught during an annual vacation.

The health advisory and guidelines for Little Rock Reservoir – as well as advisories and eating guidelines for other fish species and California bodies of water – are available at <http://www.oehha.ca.gov/fish.html>. A graphic with pictures of the fish species and the consumption advice is also available.

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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