



## **INFORMATION ABOUT EATING FISH FROM LAKE NATOMA (SACRAMENTO COUNTY)**

Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)  
California Environmental Protection Agency  
September 2021

### **Why did OEHHA update the advisory for eating fish from Lake Natoma?**

OEHHA updated an advisory for Lake Natoma to include advice for three additional species, Common Carp, Inland Silverside, and Sacramento Sucker. This advisory was developed because of mercury found in the fish caught from this water body. Lake Natoma is located approximately 15 miles northeast of Sacramento, in Sacramento County. This advisory is part of an ongoing effort by OEHHA to provide safe-eating advice for fish in different California water bodies.

### **Why should I eat fish?**

- Low-contaminant fish are an important part of a healthy, well-balanced diet. The American Heart Association recommends eating at least two servings of fish each week.
- Fish are a good source of protein and vitamins, and are a primary dietary source of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Eating low-contaminant fish while pregnant may help the baby's brain develop.

### **Which chemicals are of concern for people eating fish from Lake Natoma?**

- Mercury
  - Mercury is a metal that comes from mining, air fallout from burning coal and other fuels, and natural sources. It is the most commonly found contaminant in fish.
  - Too much methylmercury, the form of mercury found in fish, can harm the brain, especially in fetuses, babies, and children. Mothers can pass methylmercury to their babies during pregnancy.
  - Because fetuses, babies, and children are especially sensitive to mercury, OEHHA has one set of advice for the amount of mercury-containing fish that women age 18–49 years and children should eat, and another set of advice for women 50 years and older and men 18 years and older.

### **How did OEHHA determine the consumption guidelines for fish from Lake Natoma?**

- OEHHA compared chemical levels in fish caught from Lake Natoma to levels that are considered safe for human consumption.

- OEHHA’s consumption guidelines balance the health benefits of fish consumption and the risks from the contaminants.

### What does OEHHA recommend for people who want to eat fish from Lake Natoma?

- OEHHA recommends the amounts and types of fish that may be eaten each week as “servings.” A serving is about the size and thickness of your hand for fish fillets. Give children smaller servings. For smaller fish species, several individual fish may be required to yield a serving.
- Women 18–49 years and children 1–17 years
  - Should not eat black bass species, Channel Catfish, Chinook (King) Salmon, or Rainbow Trout over 16 inches
  - May eat:
    - 1 total serving per week of Common Carp or Sacramento Sucker,
    - 2 total servings per week of Inland Silverside, Rainbow Trout 16 inches or less, or sunfish species
- Women 50 years and older and men age 18 years and older
  - Should not eat Channel Catfish
  - May eat:
    - 1 total serving per week of black bass species, Chinook (King) Salmon, or Rainbow Trout over 16 inches, or
    - 2 total servings per week of Common Carp or Sacramento Sucker, or
    - 5 total servings per week of Inland Silverside, Rainbow Trout 16 inches or less, or sunfish species
- For additional fish species found in Lake Natoma and not included in this advisory, OEHHA recommends following the [statewide advisory for eating fish from California’s lakes and reservoirs without site-specific advice](#).

### What else can I do to protect my health and the health of my family?

- Eat a variety of fish.
- Eat smaller (younger) fish of legal size.
- Eat only the skinless fillet or meat portion of fish.
- Thoroughly cook the fish, allow the juice to drain away.
- Learn about OEHHA’s guidelines for eating sport fish in California:
  - Visit <https://oehha.ca.gov/fish/advisories>, or call OEHHA at (916) 324-7572 or (510) 622-3170
  - Check the Freshwater or Ocean Sport Fishing Regulations booklets from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, or visit <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Regulations>



**Women**  
(18 – 49 Years)

**Children**  
(1 – 17 Years)

**2** TOTAL  
SERVINGS  
A WEEK

OR

**1** TOTAL  
SERVING  
A WEEK

**0** DO NOT  
EAT

**0** DO NOT  
EAT

**Serving Size**

A serving of fish is about the size and thickness of your hand. Give children smaller servings.

For Adults



For Children



**Women**  
(50+ Years)

**Men**  
(18+ Years)

**5** TOTAL  
SERVINGS  
A WEEK

OR

**2** TOTAL  
SERVINGS  
A WEEK

OR

**1** TOTAL  
SERVING  
A WEEK

**0** DO NOT  
EAT

# A GUIDE TO EATING FISH from LAKE NATOMA

(SACRAMENTO COUNTY)

### Eat the Good Fish

Eating fish that are low in chemicals may provide health benefits to children and adults.



### Avoid the Bad Fish

Eating fish with higher levels of chemicals like mercury or PCBs may cause health problems in children and adults.



### Choose the Right Fish

Chemicals may be more harmful to unborn babies and children.



Inland Silverside



**Rainbow Trout**  
16 inches or less  
♥ high in omega-3s



Sunfish Species



Common Carp



Sacramento Sucker



Black Bass Species



Chinook (King) Salmon



**Rainbow Trout**  
over 16 inches



Channel Catfish



California Office of Environmental  
Health Hazard Assessment

web [www.oehha.ca.gov/fish](http://www.oehha.ca.gov/fish)  
email [fish@oehha.ca.gov](mailto:fish@oehha.ca.gov)  
phone (916) 324-7572

Eat only the  
skinless fillet



Some chemicals are higher in the skin, fat, and guts.

Eat only the meat



Updated 09/2021