



Press Release

California Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
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Advisory for Yuba River and Deer Creek Offers Safe Eating Advice for Five Species of Fish

SACRAMENTO – A state fish advisory issued today for the Yuba River and Deer Creek provides safe eating advice for black bass species, Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout, Sacramento Pikeminnow, and Sacramento Sucker. The Yuba River watershed spans four counties (Nevada, Placer, Sierra, and Yuba) and is located between Yuba City and the crest of the Sierra Nevada.

The California Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) developed the recommendations based on the levels of mercury found in fish caught from these waters.

“Many fish have nutrients that may reduce the risk of heart disease and are an excellent source of protein,” said Dr. Lauren Zeise, director of OEHHA. “By following our guidelines for fish caught at Yuba River and Deer Creek, people can safely eat fish low in chemical contaminants and enjoy the well-known health benefits of fish consumption.”

OEHHA’s fish eating advice is available in English and Spanish posters for three geographic areas of the Yuba River watershed: 1) [the “mainstem” Yuba River \(between New Bullards Bar Reservoir and Yuba City\), North Yuba River, and Middle Yuba River;](#) 2) [the South Yuba River;](#) and 3) [Deer Creek](#), a Nevada County tributary of the Yuba River. Specific advice was previously developed for [New Bullards Bar Reservoir](#) and [Englebright Lake](#), also located within the greater watershed.

OEHHA’s advice is based on elevated levels of mercury found in some fish species from the Yuba River watershed. Human activities, such as burning coal and the historic use of mercury in gold mining, have added mercury into the environment. Mercury is also naturally occurring in some rocks and soil. It accumulates in fish in the form of methylmercury, which can damage the brain and nervous system, especially in developing children and fetuses. Because of this, OEHHA provides a separate set of recommendations specifically for children up to age 17, and women of childbearing age (18-45 years).

Eating fish in amounts slightly greater than the advisory's recommendations is not likely to cause health problems if it is done occasionally, such as eating fish caught during an annual vacation.

For the mainstem Yuba River, North and Middle Yuba Rivers, women ages 18 – 45 and children ages 1-17 should not eat black bass species or Sacramento Pikeminnow. They may safely eat a maximum of two servings per week of Rainbow Trout, or one serving per week of Sacramento Sucker.

For the mainstem Yuba River, North and Middle Yuba Rivers, women ages 46 years and older and men ages 18 years and older may eat six servings per week of Rainbow Trout, or two servings per week of Sacramento Sucker, or one serving per week of black bass species or Sacramento Pikeminnow.

When consuming fish from the South Yuba River, women 18 – 45 years and children 1–17 years should not eat black bass species or Sacramento Sucker. They may eat three servings per week of Brown Trout, or two servings per week of Rainbow Trout.

Women 46 years and older and men age 18 years and older may eat seven servings per week of Brown Trout, or five servings per week of Rainbow Trout, or one serving per week of black bass species or Sacramento Sucker caught from the South Yuba River.

When consuming fish from Deer Creek, women ages 18 – 45 and children ages 1–17 may eat one serving per week of Brown Trout. Women 46 years and older and men age 18 years and older may eat three servings per week of Brown Trout.

One serving is an eight-ounce fish fillet, measured prior to cooking, which is roughly the size and thickness of your hand. Children should be given smaller servings. For small fish species, several individual fish may make up a single serving.

For fish species found in the Yuba River and Deer Creek that are not included in this advisory, OEHHA recommends following the [statewide advisory for eating fish that migrate](#).

The Yuba River and Deer Creek advisory recommendations join more than 100 other OEHHA advisories that provide site-specific, health-based fish consumption advice for many of the places where people catch and eat fish in California, including lakes, rivers, bays, reservoirs, and the California coast.

The health advisory and eating advice for the Yuba River and Deer Creek – as well as eating guidelines for other fish species and California bodies of water – are available on OEHHA's Fish Advisories webpage: <http://www.oehha.ca.gov/fish/advisories>. The Yuba River and Deer Creek posters are available in both English and Spanish.

OEHHA's mission is to protect and enhance the health of Californians and our state's environment through scientific evaluations that inform, support and guide regulatory and other actions.

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