The Delta Mercury Exposure Reduction Program (Delta MERP) is a multi-year effort to reduce human exposure to mercury from eating fish caught in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. While fish is a highly nutritious food and an important part of a healthy diet, many types of fish caught in the Delta and other California water bodies contain methylmercury, a harmful chemical that forms when bacteria react with mercury in water. To protect the public’s health, fish consumption advisories have been issued for many waterbodies throughout the state, including several in the Delta. The advisories provide guidance on the specific types and amounts of Delta fish that can be safely eaten.

The objective of Delta MERP is to reduce the risks of mercury exposure by raising awareness and understanding of safe fish consumption practices. To accomplish this, we work with impacted communities and design and implement culturally-relevant activities and educational materials. The Delta MERP is a part of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board’s (Water Board) efforts to reduce mercury loadings to the Delta. Because it will take many years to reduce the amount of bioavailable mercury (methyl mercury) in the Delta that causes contamination in fish, the Water Board is implementing the Delta MERP to encourage actions that will reduce mercury exposure. The Delta MERP activities for 2014-2017 include the following:

- Outreach to communities through small group meetings and promoting participation;
- Quarterly meetings of a community stakeholder group to gain input on project activities;
- A small grants program to fund community-based projects with affected populations;
- Development and distribution of multilingual educational materials;
- Posting of fish consumption advisory signs in fishing locations throughout the Delta;
- Training and technical assistance to raise awareness and understanding of fish contamination issues in the Delta to communities;
- Collaboration with local programs to include fish contamination messages in their work.

The Water Board is partnering with the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy, the Office of Environmental Health and Hazard Association, and the California Department of Public Health in implementing the Delta MERP. The program staff encourages community-based organizations, Tribes, fish consumers, anglers, fishing organizations, other community representatives, and local agencies with an interest in fish contamination issues in the Delta to participate in the Delta MERP. The program is funded by State agencies, wastewater dischargers, local storm water agencies, and land managers in the Delta.

For more information about the Delta MERP, please contact: Selina Cole at selina.cole@waterboards.ca.gov or (916) 464-4683 or Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon at shakoora.azimi-gaylon@deltaconservancy.ca.gov or visit: http://www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov/delta-mercury-exposure-reduction-program-merp.

For more information about fish advisories in the Delta, visit: www.oehha.ca.gov/fish.html.
Delta Fish Consumption Advisories – 3 Delta regions

1. Sacramento River and North Delta  
2. Central and South Delta  
3. San Joaquin River

Fish Consumption Advisory Signs (English) for each of the three regions are currently being posted at fishing locations throughout the Delta.

Tri-Fold Brochures and Kiosk Flyers are handed out at community events and locations and have been translated into nine languages:

• English, Chinese, Hmong, Khmer (Cambodian), Lao, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.
A guide to eating fish caught in the Sacramento River and Northern Delta

Includes all waterbodies in the Delta north of Highway 12

Women 18 - 45 and children 1 - 17

Low

Medium

High

Mercury Meter

American shad
Rainbow trout
Steelhead trout
Chinook (king) salmon
Asiatic clam

Carp or goldfish
Crappie
Sucker
Bluegill or other sunfish
Catfish
Hardhead
Crayfish

Striped bass
Bass
Pikeminnow
White sturgeon

Men over 17 and women over 45 can safely eat more fish

- 7 servings a week OR
- 3 servings a week OR
- 2 servings a week of striped bass OR
- 1 serving a week of bass, pikeminnow, or white sturgeon

What is a serving?

For Adults
For Children

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

Why eat fish?
Eating fish is good for your health. Fish have Omega-3s that can reduce your risk for heart disease and improve how the brain develops in unborn babies and children.

What is the concern?
Some fish have high levels of mercury and PCBs. Mercury can harm the brain especially in unborn babies and children. PCBs can cause cancer.

2 servings a week OR
7 servings a week of clams

OR

1 serving per week

Do not eat

Californian Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment • www.oehha.ca.gov/fish.html • (916) 327-7319 or (510) 622-3170

Rainbow trout photo: John Lyons, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Heart symbol = High in Omega-3s

* It is only legal to keep hatchery steelhead and only in select waters, see www.wildlife.ca.gov/Regulations

11-14
A guide to eating fish caught in the **Central and South Delta**
Includes all waterbodies in the Delta south of Highway 12 (except the Sacramento River and the San Joaquin River south of Stockton)

**Women 18 - 45 and children 1 - 17**

![Fish illustrations with mercury levels]

- Crayfish
- American shad
- Catfish
- Bass
- Bluegill or other sunfish
- Steelhead trout
- Asiatic clam
- 2 servings a week OR
- 7 servings a week of clams

![Fish illustrations with mercury levels]

- Sucker
- Crappie
- Carp
- Striped bass
- White sturgeon
- 1 serving a week

**Men over 17 and women over 45 can safely eat more fish**

- 7 servings a week OR
- 5 servings a week of crayfish or catfish OR
- 2 servings a week OR
- 2 servings a week of striped bass OR
- 1 serving a week of sturgeon

Do not eat any fish or shellfish from the Port of Stockton.

**What is a serving?**

For Adults For Children

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

**Why eat fish?**

Eating fish is good for your health. Fish have Omega-3s that can reduce your risk for heart disease and improve how the brain develops in unborn babies and children.

**What is the concern?**

Some fish have high levels of mercury and PCBs. Mercury can harm the brain especially in unborn babies and children. PCBs can cause cancer.

California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment • www.oehha.ca.gov/fish.html • (916) 327-7319 or (510) 622-3170
# A guide to eating fish caught in the San Joaquin River

From Friant Dam to the Port of Stockton

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women 18 - 45 and children 1 - 17</th>
<th>Men over 17 and women over 45 can safely eat more fish</th>
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</thead>
</table>

- **7 servings a week OR**
  - 5 servings a week of bluegill or redear sunfish **OR**
- **2 servings a week OR**
  - 2 servings a week of striped bass **OR**
  - 1 serving a week of largemouth bass or white sturgeon
do not eat any fish or shellfish from the Port of Stockton.

**What is a serving?**

- **For Adults**
  - The recommended serving of fish is about the size and thickness of your hand. Give children smaller servings.
- **For Children**
  - The recommended serving of fish is slightly smaller than the size of your hand.

**Why eat fish?**

Eating fish is good for your health. Fish have Omega-3s that can reduce your risk for heart disease and improve how the brain develops in unborn babies and children.

**What is the concern?**

Some fish have high levels of mercury and PCBs. Mercury can harm the brain especially in unborn babies and children. PCBs can cause cancer.

### Fish List

- **Low Mercury**: Bluegill or redear sunfish
- **Medium Mercury**: Steelhead trout, American shad
- **High Mercury**: Catfish, Carp, Sucker, Striped bass, Largemouth bass, White sturgeon

*Low and Medium mercury levels are safe for eating. High mercury levels are not recommended for eating.

* = High in Omega-3s

*It is only legal to keep hatchery steelhead and only in select waters; see [www.wildlife.ca.gov/regulations](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/regulations).

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California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment  •  [www.oehha.ca.gov/fish.html](http://www.oehha.ca.gov/fish.html)  •  (916) 327-7319 or (510) 622-3170