

State of California
Regional Water Quality Control Board
San Diego Region

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT
March 9, 2016

- ITEM: 11
- SUBJECT: Information Item: Preliminary Data from the San Diego Bay Fish Consumption Study (*Tom Alo*)
- PURPOSE: To provide information to the San Diego Water Board and the public on the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project's (SCCWRP) ongoing San Diego Bay Fish Consumption Study.
- RECOMMENDATION: This is an information item only; no action will be taken by the Board at today's meeting.
- KEY ISSUES:
1. The study will identify San Diego Bay specific data to be used in Human Health Risk Assessments.
 2. The study will identify the key demographic and economic groups consuming fish from San Diego Bay.
- PRACTICAL VISION: Consistent with the mission of the Monitoring and Assessment chapter of the Practical Vision, the goals of this study are to provide essential information necessary to (1) assess risk to humans eating fish caught from San Diego Bay, and (2) inform the development of cleanup goals for contaminated sediment and numeric targets for TMDLs to protect human health.
- DISCUSSION: San Diego Bay is one of the five largest ports in California (Supporting Document 1). With 34 miles of waterfront, it is a major receiving water body for the San Diego Bay Watershed, which has over one million residents, consists of over 442 square miles, and is a major naval, commercial, and recreational center. Many different types of activities occur in the bay, including shipbuilding/repair, military/defense and manufacturing, to name a few; hence, the potential for contamination from many sources exists and numerous urban and industrial discharges contribute pollutants to the bay. San Diego Bay is on the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list for impairment of fish tissue by polychlorinated biphenyls. Mercury levels in fish tissue are

also a concern.

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) with the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal-EPA) released the “Health Advisory and Guidelines for Eating Fish from San Diego Bay (San Diego County)” report in October of 2013. This report recommends fish consumption rates for fish caught within the bay for men and particularly for the population of main concern, women of childbearing age and children (Supporting Documents 2 and 3). OEHHA and Cal-EPA used the chemical concentrations in fish tissue to determine how much consumers can eat within acceptable exposure levels.

Previous fish consumption surveys of San Diego Bay all had limited sample size and/or were limited to certain areas such as piers. Given the data gaps in these studies, knowledge of the current fishing and consumption habits of anglers fishing in San Diego Bay is lacking, as well as knowledge of the associated health risks. Nationwide, there is increasing analytical evidence and growing public concern that fish and shellfish caught and consumed by anglers may contain chemical contaminants that pose health risks. To quantify these risks, contaminant levels in fish, consumption patterns, and preparation techniques of the fishing population must be understood.

The San Diego Bay Bioaccumulation Studies¹ have begun to characterize levels of contaminants in sediment, water, and tissue known to pose health risks in bay fish, but information that describes the consumption patterns of bay anglers has been more limited and mostly focused on select populations.

The goals of the San Diego Bay Fish Consumption Study are to provide essential information necessary to (1) assess risk to humans eating fish caught from San Diego Bay, and (2) inform the development of cleanup goals for contaminated sediment and numeric targets for TMDLs to protect human health. In addition, the findings of this study will provide information for improving outreach and education to different segments of the fishing population and for guiding contaminant studies to monitor fish that people consume. SCCWRP began surveying anglers in May 2015, and will conclude the surveys in April 2016.

¹ Conducted by the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) and funded by the San Diego Water Board, San Diego Unified Port District, and City of San Diego.

SCCWRP designed the study to answer the following questions:

1. What are the consumption rates for anglers in San Diego Bay and how does that relate to advisory recommendations?
2. How do socio-economic differences relate to difference in consumption rates?
3. How do consumption rates vary by time of year?

A Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for this study convened in August 2014 to provide guidance and technical support throughout the study. The members of this committee include participants from a wide variety of organizations, ranging from regulators, resource agencies, environmental groups, industrial dischargers, and citizen angler representatives.

LEGAL CONCERNS: None.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

1. Figure 1 – Map of San Diego Bay
2. Figure 2 – OEHHA Fish Consumption Advisory Guidelines for San Diego Bay, Women \leq 45 years old and Children < 18 years old
3. Figure 3 – OEHHA Fish Consumption Advisory Guidelines for San Diego Bay, Women > 45 years old and Men

PUBLIC NOTICE: This item was publicly noticed in the Meeting Notice and Agenda for the March 9, 2016 meeting.