

Spiny lobster recreational and commercial fisheries open

October 9, 2023



The California spiny lobster fishery opened Friday, Sept. 29, for recreational diving and hoop netting, followed by the commercial fishery on Wednesday, Oct. 4.

State health agencies determined that spiny lobster sampled off of mainland Los Angeles County had elevated levels of domoic acid and recommended a delayed opening of the recreational and commercial fishery in the area. Following this recommendation, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Director Charlton H. Bonham enacted a delay to the start of the recreational and commercial spiny lobster fisheries within specific areas of Los Angeles and Orange counties. Areas immediately surrounding the recreational delay area will be open to recreational take under an advisory issued by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to avoid consuming the viscera (tomalley) and roe (eggs) of spiny lobster. Cooking lobsters neither decreases nor destroys the toxin, so consumers are advised to discard the viscera, roe and cooking liquids.

The delay areas shall remain in effect until OEHHA, in consultation with the State Public Health Officer of CDPH, determines that domoic acid no longer poses a significant risk to public health. Both delays are

contingent upon additional sampling, planned for next week. Samples from Sept. 18 were below the health hazard threshold. If next week's samples are also below the threshold, the delays may be lifted. Results are not anticipated until late next week, so the earliest the delays could be removed would be Friday, Sept. 29, just before the recreational season opens. CDFW will post notices on their website and in the media as soon as any changes are made.

The recreational delay area is defined as state waters between the following landmarks: the northern boundary of the Point Vicente SMCA and the westernmost point of the Long Beach Breakwater. The area is bounded by straight lines connecting the following points in the order listed except where noted: 33° 44.800' N. lat. 118° 24.807' W. long.; 33° 44.800' N. lat. 118° 28.931' W. long.; thence southeastward along the three nautical mile offshore boundary to 33° 40.384' N. lat. 118° 10.850' W. long.; and 33° 45.640' N. lat. 118° 10.850' W. long. Transiting the area with spiny lobster in possession is allowed as specified in the Director's Declaration.

The commercial fishery is delayed in state waters off Palos Verdes, Los Angeles County to Huntington Beach, Orange County within the following coordinates: between 118° 0.00' W longitude and 118° 30.00' W longitude, and between 33° 40.00' N. latitude and 33° 50.00' N latitude. When the commercial season opens on Oct. 4, take of spiny lobster will be prohibited in this area. Please see the Director's Declaration regarding allowances for commercial lobster trap deployment and for transiting and possessing lobster in the area.

Pursuant to Fish and Game Code, section 5523, the Director of CDFW will notify the Fish and Game Commission of the delay and request that the Commission schedule a public discussion at its next scheduled meeting.

Domoic acid is a potent neurotoxin produced by *Pseudo-nitzschia*, a naturally occurring single-celled, marine alga, under certain ocean conditions. Domoic acid can accumulate in shellfish, other invertebrates and sometimes fish without the organism becoming ill themselves. At low levels, domoic acid exposure can cause nausea, diarrhea and dizziness in humans. At higher levels, it can cause persistent short-term memory loss, seizures and can in some cases be fatal. State and federal laws prohibit the commercial distribution of seafood products that contain domoic acid levels above the federal action level, which is 20 parts per million in the viscera of spiny lobster.

Information will be updated on CDFW's fishery closure information and health advisories website.

Latest domoic acid test results for spiny lobster are posted on the CDPH's Domoic Acid website.

More information about the Domoic Acid Delays in the Spiny Lobster Fishery can be found at the following links: [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and [Recreational and Commercial Delay Area Maps](#).

To get the latest information on current fishing season closures related to domoic acid, call CDFW's Domoic Acid Fishery Closure Information Line at (831) 649-2883.

For the latest consumption warnings, call the CDPH's Biotoxin Info Line at (510) 412-4643.

or at (800) 553-4133.