

# Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment



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## **Fish Advisory for Placer County's French Meadows and Hell Hole Reservoirs Offers Safe Eating Advice for Brown Trout, Crayfish, and Other Species**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SACRAMENTO – A new state fish advisory issued today for the French Meadows and Hell Hole Reservoirs, located northeast of Auburn and Foresthill in Placer County, offers safe eating advice for five species of fish.

“Eating fish low in mercury can help reduce the risk of heart disease and is an excellent source of protein,” said Dr. Lauren Zeise, acting director of the California Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA).

“These guidelines are designed to balance the health benefits of eating fish against the risks from exposure to mercury in fish caught from the French Meadows and Hell Hole Reservoirs.”

The recommendations developed by OEHHA for each fish species are based on the levels of mercury measured in fish from the French Meadows and Hell Hole Reservoirs in Placer County.

Mercury is a naturally occurring metal that is released into the environment from mining and burning coal and accumulates in fish in the form of methylmercury. Methylmercury can damage the brain and nervous system, especially in developing children and fetuses.

When consuming fish from French Meadows, women ages 18-45 and children ages 1-17 can safely eat three servings of Rainbow Trout per week, or two servings of crayfish per week, or one serving of Brown Trout per week. Women age 46 and older and men age 18 and older can safely eat seven servings of crayfish or Rainbow Trout per week, or three servings of Brown Trout per week.

When consuming fish from Hell Hole Reservoir, women ages 18-45 and children ages 1-17 should avoid eating Brown Trout over 16 inches in length or Lake Trout. However, they can safely eat one serving of Brown Trout that are 16 inches or shorter, crayfish or Kokanee Salmon per week. Women age 46 and older and men age 18 and older

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should also avoid eating Brown Trout over 16 inches in length. However, they can safely eat one serving of Lake Trout or two servings of crayfish per week. Alternatively, they can eat three servings of either Brown Trout that are 16 inches or shorter or Kokanee Salmon per week.

One serving is eight ounces prior to cooking, which for fish fillets is roughly the size and thickness of your hand. Give children smaller servings.

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.

The health advisory and eating advice for French Meadows and Hell Hole Reservoirs – as well as eating guidelines for other fish species and California bodies of water – are available at <http://www.oehha.ca.gov/fish/advisories>. Pictorial fish consumption advice is also available on that page in both English and Spanish.

OEHHA is the primary state entity for the assessment of risks posed by chemical contaminants in the environment. Its mission is to protect and enhance public health and the environment by scientific evaluation of risks posed by hazardous substances.

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