

## DECEMBER 2011 - PROGRESS REPORT

### Bioaccumulation Oversight Group (BOG) Workgroup

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#### **Mission of the BOG**

To assess the impacts of contaminants in fish and shellfish on beneficial uses in California water bodies through statewide monitoring under SWAMP (Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program) and coordination with other programs, and to present this information to decision-makers and the public in a form that they can easily use.

#### **Overall Assessment of Success of the BOG**

The BOG's initial five-year SWAMP workplan consisted of a series of statewide surveys of contaminants in sport fish in California's freshwater lakes and reservoirs, coastal waters, and rivers and streams. We have completed three years of this five-year workplan. The monitoring consisted of surveying all water body types in California supporting the fishing beneficial use. The sport fish monitoring work completed so far includes a two-year survey of freshwater lakes and reservoirs and the first year of a two-year survey of coastal waters. The goal of these studies was to find out the overall status of contaminant impacts on California's fishing resources. As we move forward, we are in the process of transitioning from a SWAMP-specific workgroup to an expanded workgroup to address larger questions important to the California Water Quality Monitoring Council and the broader topic of bioaccumulation in California water bodies in general.

#### **Accomplishments in the Past Year**

- Began development of a "Strategy for Coordinated Monitoring, Assessment, and Communication of Information on Bioaccumulation in Aquatic Ecosystems in California"
  - The general goals of the Bioaccumulation Strategy are
    - 1) to promote coordinated, long-term statewide monitoring and assessment to generate the data needed to support water quality protection and restoration (TMDLs, etc.) and
    - 2) to communicate to the public and provide public access to information on fish contamination that the public can use to reduce their exposure to contaminants and participate in management processes in an informed manner.
  - The Strategy document will highlight recent accomplishments, remaining issues, goals and objectives for the future, how we are organized and how that will change in the future, recommendations, reporting goals, cost implications, workgroup membership, potential partners, and a revised charter addressing our changing roles and the expanded workgroup.
- Continued to expand, refine and improve the Safe to Eat Fish portal page.
  - Expanded the available data accessible to the Public on the "Safe to Eat Fish" Portal page, this includes the data added from the first year of our Coastal Survey.
  - The Data and Trends map (Contaminant Data map) on the Safe to Eat Fish Portal is fed directly by CEDEN.
  - Added links to the National (EPA) Listing on Fish Advisories

- Updated the Improvements page, also known as the “What Is Being Done to Reduce These Problems?” page, by adding the “Exposure Reduction Programs” and “Get Involved” sections
- Produced a report on results from the first year of a two-year statewide screening survey of contaminants in sport fish from California coastal waters:
  - The report, *Contaminants in Sport Fish from the California Coast, 2009*, represents a major step forward in understanding the extent of chemical contamination in sport fish on the California coast. Monitoring in 2009 focused on areas near Los Angeles and San Francisco, including San Francisco Bay.
  - This survey and the report were a joint product of SWAMP, the Regional Monitoring Program for San Francisco Bay, and the Southern California Bight Regional Monitoring Program. The unprecedented coordination among these three programs resulted in considerable benefits to each partner, and resulted in a very thorough assessment of contaminants in fish in the regions sampled in 2009.
  - The study has provided information that will be valuable in prioritizing areas in need of further study, support development of consumption guidelines and cleanup plans, and provide information the public can use to be better informed about the degree of contamination of their favorite fishing spots. Updated safe eating guidelines for San Francisco Bay, based largely on the SWAMP/RMP monitoring, were released by OEHHA in 2011.
- Completed the monitoring plan and the collection of sport fish in a one-year screening survey of bioaccumulation in California rivers and streams.
  - This effort is the last part of the long-term Bioaccumulation Monitoring Project that is providing comprehensive monitoring of bioaccumulation in California water bodies.

### **Data and Information Management**

The BOG continues to coordinate with the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN) and as of this year the Data and Trends map (Contaminant Data) is fed by CEDEN. After completing the Strategy document, we will seek partners that would add data into CEDEN as well and give an even more complete picture of the status of bioaccumulation in California waters.

### **Additional Funding to Support BOG Projects**

Historically, the BOG has been able to coordinate with the Regional Water Board Programs, San Francisco Bay Regional Monitoring Program (RMP), and Southern California Bight Regional Monitoring Program. This coordination allowed the BOG to expand the amount of data collected and the analysis for our statewide freshwater lakes and reservoirs and coastal surveys. In the future, we plan to partner with other organizations as well. Our tentative plan for 2012 is to coordinate with U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on a project that would evaluate mercury bioaccumulation and risks to birds.

## **Plans for 2012**

Next year, the BOG plans to accomplish the following:

- Complete the Strategy document and begin implementation of plans to promote coordination of bioaccumulation monitoring, assessment, and reporting in California. Form partnerships with the major bioaccumulation programs in California.
- Produce a report on results from the two-year statewide screening survey of contaminants in sport fish from California coastal waters:
  - This report will combine results from the first year coastal sport fish study released last year with results for the areas sampled in the second year and will present a statewide assessment.
- Conduct monitoring and monitoring workplan development. Tentative plans call for a survey of mercury risks to birds in lakes and reservoirs, and holding a workshop to develop a statewide monitoring strategy for biotoxins.
- Continue to expand, refine and improve the Safe to Eat Fish portal page:
  - Incorporate the new data from the second year of the coastal sport fish study.
  - Update the “impaired” waters section of the Safe to Eat Fish portal page with the data released from the final California 2010 Integrated Report on Water Quality.

## **List of Agencies Participating in the BOG**

### **State Agencies**

- California Department of Fish and Game
- Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board
- North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
- San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
- State Water Resources Control Board
- Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment

### **Federal Agencies**

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- US Geological Survey
- US Fish and Wildlife Service

### **Other Agencies**

- San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI)
- Moss Landing Marine Laboratories (MLML)
- Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP)