

# SWORDFISH: DANGEROUS FOR YOU. FATAL TO SEA TURTLES.

**FDA WARNING:** Swordfish, shark, king mackerel and tilefish (also known as golden snapper) contain enough mercury to affect the central nervous system and harm developing fetuses. Pregnant and nursing women, women who might become pregnant and young children should not eat these fish. *[Read a copy of the FDA's Advisory on Fish & Methylmercury at [www.seaturtles.org](http://www.seaturtles.org)]*

This extraordinary warning concerns methylmercury, a toxic pollutant highly concentrated in the flesh of large fish at the top of the food chain.

Even at very low exposures, mercury permanently harms the sensitive, developing nervous systems of fetuses, infants and young children.

But everyone is vulnerable as doses increase. Symptoms of mercury poisoning include blurred vision, numbness, motor difficulties, and at high doses, as in the case with Minamata Disease, seizures and death.

The FDA recommends that all adults and children limit their consumption of swordfish, shark, king mackerel and tilefish, all of which contain high mercury levels as does tuna.

As it happens, swordfish, shark and tuna are caught in the ocean on lines up to 60 miles long, barbed with thousands of hooks. This commercial fishing technique, called longlining, is rapidly driving endangered Pacific leatherback turtles, the earth's largest reptile, to

extinction. These gentle giants can grow to 9 feet in length and weigh up to 2,000 pounds. But they will disappear from the oceans in just a few years if industrial longline fishing isn't halted now.



Thousands of Pacific leatherback turtles have been killed by industrial fishing fleets longlining for swordfish, shark and tuna. Experts predict these rare sea turtles will vanish soon unless fishing pressure is reduced across the Pacific. *You can help by sending the coupon below.*

And sea turtles aren't the only creatures suffering from longline fishing. The 1.8 billion to 10 billion hooks set each year by industrial long-liners cruelly snag and drown seals, sharks and seabirds, including rare albatrosses.

Rarely have human self-interest and the fate of a shy and harmless species coincided so dramatically.

By protecting yourself and those you love from mercury poisoning, and not eating swordfish, shark and tuna, you also help sea turtles that survived the dinosaurs survive industrial fishing fleets.

For the ocean's health, and your own, heed the federal warnings on swordfish and other contaminated fish.

To learn more, please visit our website: [www.seaturtles.org](http://www.seaturtles.org)



**SEA TURTLE  
RESTORATION  
PROJECT**

**Joan Benton, PhD, Director**

California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment

cc: **Governor Gray Davis**

The National Academy of Sciences, EPA and FDA have found serious health risks associated with methylmercury contamination of seafood, especially for pregnant women and children. In light of their warnings, I strongly urge your agency to immediately release a public health advisory regarding swordfish and other contaminated fish. In addition, your agency should launch a coordinated and comprehensive public education campaign to inform Californians about the health risks associated with eating contaminated seafood.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL/PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

**Sea Turtle Restoration Project**

Turtle Island Restoration Network  
P.O. Box 400, Forest Knolls, CA 94933  
800-859-SAVE — [www.seaturtles.org](http://www.seaturtles.org)

I support your efforts to save giant, gentle sea turtles. I enclose my tax-deductible contribution, made out to Sea Turtle Restoration Project, in the amount of:  
 \_\_\_\$1000 \_\_\_\$250 \_\_\_\$100 \_\_\_\$50 \_\_\_\$25 or \$\_\_\_\_\_.  
*Call us for details on credit card donations.*

Please send me more information about your ongoing projects and how I can help.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL/PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

**URGENT!** Fill out and mail or fax to: Sea Turtle Restoration Project, P.O. Box 400, Forest Knolls, CA 94933 Fax (415) 488-0372.  
 We will forward your message to Joan Benton and Governor Gray Davis directly! Thank you.