

Warning over tainted trout

"Press"
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Fish & Game is suggesting precautionary measures around fishing where 1080 poison has been laid in South Canterbury but advises against over-reaction.

Central South Island chief executive Jay Graybill said the 1080 use was limited to the lakes Ohau and Tekapo catchments. The hand-laid bait in traps did not have a wide distribution unlike aerial drops.

The poisoning operation by the Department of Conservation is in response to an anticipated "mouse plague" and has some anglers concerned there may be a health risk.

Fish & Game chief executive Bryce Johnson said DOC commissioned independent research into risks of mice - which were often eaten by trout - carrying sub-lethal levels of 1080 and becoming a food safety risk for humans. The research showed 1080 levels in trout flesh were significantly higher than recognised food safety guidelines.

Graybill said as a precaution fish should be released, not eaten, for at least 60 days after bait was first laid to be certain there is no risk. He said he understood a lot of trout would need to be eaten for there to be any health risk.

- He said the likelihood was very low the poison would get into the hydro canals. "Anglers should take precautions and approach it as a risk though it is a very small one."

South Canterbury Anglers Club member Ivan Stevenson said he did not fish where the bait was located but suggested anglers should look out for warning signs. He would never eat a fish caught where he had seen a sign.

For more information of 1080 placement visit: doc.govt.nz.

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