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Compliance monitoring in a regional context: Revising seafood tissue monitoring for risk assessment

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ABSTRACT

Seafood tissue monitoring in Santa Monica Bay, CA, for regulatory compliance has provided information about contamination around major wastewater outfalls, but has not been useful in health management. It has not always focused on species caught by sport fishing, or on key sport fishing areas. Separate programs were uncoordinated, using distinct sampling patterns to collect different species. Most importantly, monitoring was not designed to feed information into a formal health management process. The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project oversaw the development of a regionally coordinated monitoring program. It stressed that monitoring should support risk-based health management decision making by California EPA. This led to fundamental changes in the existing compliance-based monitoring design. We describe these and examine the features of the management system that both allowed for and supported an unusual degree of change in long-standing compliance monitoring programs.

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