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Chemical level safe in blue-claws

A sampling of blue claw crabs taken from the Hudson River indicates they contain "acceptably" low levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

The tests on the crabs were conducted by the State Department of Environmental Conservation. It said 10 crabs were tested and found to have levels of 3.98 parts per million. The level at which the department can take action against polluters or to prevent public consumption of a species is five parts per million.

The monitoring of aquatic life in the river is an ongoing project of the department. Concern over PCBs mounted recently when levels of the chemicals found in striped bass caught in the river was found to be in excess of levels safe for human consumption. People have been urged to avoid eating the bass.

The source of PCBs is from upstate manufacturing

operations. In particular two facilities of the General Electric Co., which have had permits to discharge the substances into the river.

The conservation department is also testing waters throughout the state as part of its inquiry into the extent of contamination by heavy metals including mercury, insecticides and PCBs.