St. Louis to Replace Bad Fish Removed From 5 of Its Lakes

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ST. LOUIS, Aug. 24—With the help of several truckloads of carp and bullheads, fishing will return to the St. Louis summer recreation scene tomorrow after all the fish in five city park lakes had to be killed two weeks ago.

Carp put in the lakes a week earlier had been found to contain dangerous levels of polychlorinated biphenyl, or PCB, a toxic industrial chemical.

PCB, used since 1930 in the manufacture of many products but principally in the making of electrical transformers, has been banned in Canada and Britain. In Japan, 16 deaths have been attributed to poisoning from the chemical.

Urban Fishing Program

The Food and Drug Administration says that any food containing more than five parts of the chemical for every million parts of food is unsafe for human consumption. The carp with which the lakes here were stocked contained 50 parts of PBC per million parts of flesh.

The fish were brought to St. Louis as part of a highly successful urban fishing program, initiated by the Federal Government five years ago and subsequently carried out by the Missouri Conservation Commission. Each year, the state agency stocks the city lakes with bullheads and carp to supplement the bluegill and bass raised in the city hatchery.

It is still not clear why the carp contained so much PCB. The fish were purchased from a fishery in Wisconsin on Lake Michigan's Green Bay, near the mouth of the Fox River in a highly industrialized area.

Federal inspectors, who had suspected that abnormally high PCB levels might be present in the shipments from the fishery, took a few sample fish from the load bound for St. Louis but did not hold the entire shipment, pending the results of their tests.

A week after the fish were released here, F.D.A. officials ordered the fish destroyed.

There was no way to separate the contaminated carp from the healthy fish; all were killed through the use of a chemical called rotevone, which acts on the gill membranes, rendering the fish unable to remove dissolved oxygen from the water. The chemical dissipated in five days.

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