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# Warning Issued for Lake Superior Trout

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — State officials have issued warnings about eating Lake Superior lake trout, after excessive levels of toxic materials were found in sample fish.

Although samples surveyed were small compared to the lake's total fish population, the data "is sufficient . . . to indicate the general extent and severity of fish contamination in Lake Superior," the state Department of Natural Resources reported Thursday.

Toxic materials in lake trout samples included mercury, DDT and PCBs, scientists said. No excessive contamination of other fish species samples — chub, lake herring and whitefish — was found.

Dr. Maurice Reizen, state public health director, said, "We do not wish to be alarmists in this matter," but based on medical judgement several recommendations are necessary "to minimize the potential adverse health impact." Pregnant women should take special precautions eating lake trout because the effects of the chemicals on unborn children is unknown, Reizen said.

Lake Superior shoreline residents who regularly fish and eat their catch should not use lake trout as a major food source, Reizen said. Lake trout consumption, he said, should not exceed one meal per week, although the proportion of ingested DDT and PCB can be reduced by removing the major fat deposits before cooking. Tourists who sport fish also should limit lake trout meals to one a week, Reizen said.

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Reizen noted the suggested limits are "somewhat arbitrary," but said, "We feel that these recommendations are suitable for those who regularly eat fish from Lake Superior."

The joint state-federal study, prepared by the state Department of Natural Resources, says lake trout found in western Lake Superior — especially near Isle Royale — had mercury levels greater than one part per million. The Food and Drug Administration minimum tolerance for human consumption is 0.5 parts per million.

Seventy-five per cent of the Isle Royale area fish sampled exceeded federal mercury tolerances, the study says.

The Isle Royale area fish also carried levels of the insecticide DDT and the industrial chemical PCB at more than the five parts per million established for minimum tolerances.

In Black River Harbor-Ontonagon waters, 68 per cent of the 40 fish sampled exceed the mercury limit.

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Sources of the toxic materials have not been identified, said Dr. Howard Tanner, DNR director. But "potential sources of contaminants include industry, municipal wastewater treatment plants and atmospheric fallout," he said.

Evidence also indicates some mercury may be present because of high concentrations in certain rocks and geologic formations, he said.

Lake trout in the Marquette-Munising area had the highest PCB contamination level, at 69 per cent. Isle Royale's PCB level was the lowest with 17 per cent exceeding tolerances.

Other areas involved in the study were Grand Marais and Whitefish Point, both on the eastern side of the lake, where contamination levels were lowest.

The study, the annual Great Lakes Environmental Contaminants Survey, showed in previous years that some Lake Superior fish had concentrations of toxic materials above federal levels.

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