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Limit fish consumption DNR warns

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), upon advice of the Wisconsin Division of Health, suggests that people limit their consumption of large trout and salmon from Lake Michigan, and other fish from the Upper Mississippi river, and the Fox river near Portage.

Fish in these waters contain more than the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's acceptable level of PCB's (Polychlorinated Biphenyls).

The FDA has set the public health action level for market fish at 5 parts per million (ppm) of PCB's. Recognizing that some larger fish in these waters contain more than 5 ppm, the Division of Health recommends that, "sports fishermen be advised to refrain from eating more than one meal per week of such fish and that pregnant women and children be cautioned to limit their intake to one average size serving of such fish per week."

Fish from the following waters have been found to exceed these levels:

1. Lake Michigan and Green Bay trout and salmon, including lake trout, coho salmon, chinook salmon, and brown trout, over 24 inches in length.

2. Many fish in the Mississippi river between Prescott and Lower Lake Pepin.

3. Many fish in the Fox river from Portage north to the Columbia county line.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture has announced that it will take action and seize any fish offered for commercial sale containing more than 5 ppm of PCB's. Lake trout over 24 inches long caught by commercial fishermen in Lake Michigan incidental to their netting operations for other species will no longer be sold for human consumption. The DNR will provide the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture with samples of these fish for testing and regulatory action.

A surveillance program to identify and abate sources of PCB discharge will be continued by the DNR along with its fish monitoring program. Fish from Lake Michigan and Green Bay, the Upper Mississippi river, the Fox river downstream from Portage and other waters will be monitored for PCB's. This will be a cooperative program with other states, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The DNR will also request authorization from the Natural Resources Board to hold hearings to investigate the sale, use, and distribution of PCB's along with the necessity of regulating or banning the discharge of PCB's into the environment.

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