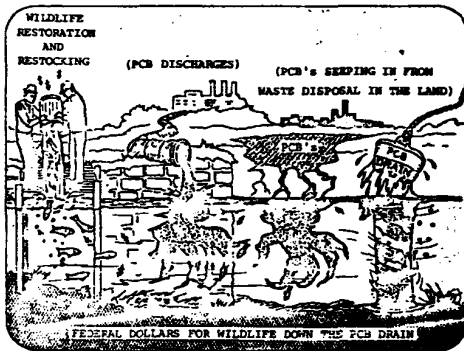


PCB'S JEOPARDIZE WILDLIFE RESTORATION EFFORTS

Widespread environmental contamination by PCB's, a group of toxic, industrial chemical substances similar to DDT, are jeopardizing federal and state efforts to restore wildlife populations and protect endangered species, announced an official of the Department of the Interior in a strongly worded statement made in November.

Speaking at a federally sponsored conference on PCB's held in Chicago on November 19 and 20, Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Nathaniel P. Reed declared, "The omnipresence of PCB residues in our environment looms as a very dark cloud casting an ominous shadow upon all of our fish and wildlife resource programs which depend on environmental quality and healthy habitats."

PCB's, polychlorinated biphenyls, have a wide variety of uses. The most important is insulation in electrical transformers and capacitors, because of PCB's chemical stability, fire resistance, and electrical insulating properties. Used throughout the world for over 40



years. PCB's in the 1960's drew international concern as the full extent of their toxicity, persistence, and widespread environmental contamination was discovered. In 1970, the problem was thought to be resolved when Monsanto Corporation, the St. Louis-based corporation which is the sole manufacturer of PCB's in the U.S., voluntarily cut back its production of PCB's for use only in "closed-cycle" capacitors and transformers.

...several reports indicate that PCB contamination is widespread, despite Monsanto's actions, and that disposal of PCB-containing equipment and air

emissions may be far more important sources of chemical contamination than discharges into waterways. As a result, some environmentalists have called for a ban on PCB use.

The Environmental Protection Agency has no comprehensive authority to regulate toxic substances in the environment, because Congress has been debating such legislation for over five years without successful conclusion. However, EPA has not yet used its water pollution control authorities to regulate discharges of especially toxic pollutants. Thus



"A picture of fish contaminated with PCB's?" responded an Environmental Protection Agency chemist to a photo request. "Take a photo of any fish," he recommended. "They look the same." Above, alewives caught in 1968.

far, its efforts have been limited to trying to get individual sources of PCB's to reduce their discharges as much as possible before they receive a permit to operate.

While EPA is far behind in using the specific authorities it does have to deal with the PCB problem, Assistant Secretary Reed says, "The PCB problem is a *National problem* that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has identified both in research programs and in the National Pesticide Monitoring Program. . . . PCB residues were found in all of the fish samples from 100 stations located in major river systems throughout the United States, and in almost all the bird samples taken since 1970."

"I am troubled by the exceedingly high levels found in fish from all our drainage systems," stated Reed, "and I do not mean just the Hudson (where very heavy PCB contamination is reported) and the entire Great Lakes' system, but the Merrimack and Connecticut rivers of the Atlantic Coast, the Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio rivers of the Midwest, the Columbia river system in the Northwest, the Sacramento in the West, the Yukon in Alaska and other . . ."

"Fish are not alone in absorbing sizeable quantities of PCB's," as noted, "The birds w-

are monitoring are equally susceptible. Waterfowl carry the highest residues in the Atlantic Flyway, followed in descending order by the Mississippi, Pacific, and Central Flyways."

As far as Reed is concerned, it does not make sense to pour millions of dollars into restoring wildlife populations if they are to be contaminated by PCB's. "Consider," he suggested, "the Atlantic Salmon egg mortality has been associated with a threshold concentration of about 0.5 parts per million of PCB's. Our scientists state that this threshold concentration in the eggs would be the equivalent to residual PCB levels in whole fish of 2.5 to 5.0 ppm, comparable to unhealthy levels found in many species throughout the United States. The Department cannot justify a salmon restoration program in any northeastern river system where the fish will be subjected to PCB residues!"

Wasted Time, Money?

In another example, Reed explained that 17 years and \$33 million have been spent to control the parasitic sea lamprey in the Great Lakes which has enabled a successful state and federal restocking program involving more than 150 million lake trout, splake, coho salmon, chinook salmon, Atlantic salmon, and kokanee, plus additional millions of rainbow, brook, and brown trout. Concludes Reed, "The resulting sport fishing of these salmonids, when combined with the existing sport fisheries on other species, currently contributes approximately \$350 million annually to the Great Lakes states and the Province of Ontario."

"All our efforts are for naught," continued Reed, "if these fish cannot be harvested — and we now face this stark possibility. A significant portion of these fish contain PCB residues in excess of the current 5.0 ppm action level (the maximum level of PCB's allowed in fish to be used for food) established by the Food and Drug Administration. As a result, warnings have been issued about the consumption of large lake trout and salmon from Lake Michigan. To varying degrees a similar PCB problem exists in Lakes Superior, Huron, and Ontario. Although the contamination by PCB's is particularly evident in salmonids, the problem is also present in commercial species such as carp, chub, smelt, and alewives."

Petition With FDA

"But if the current level were lowered to 1 or 2 ppm," predicted Reed, "then virtually all species would be restricted and essentially the entire Great Lakes' fishery would be curtailed." In November, two private environmental organizations, the Environmental Defense Fund, Inc., and the Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc., filed a petition with the Food and Drug Administration requesting that the 5 ppm action level be reduced and eventually phased out. In Canada, the Department of National Health and Welfare already has announced the establishment of temporary guidelines of 2 ppm for PCB's in that country.

NRDC reports that in experiments conducted by the Center for Disease Control, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, the National Cancer Institute, and the Environmental Protection Agency, laboratory animals fed PCB's in concentrations of 100 ppm demonstrated a marked tendency to develop malignant tumors. At

the Chicago PCB conference, Dr. Joseph Highland, director of EDF's toxic chemical program, explained that action by FDA is necessary to reduce the risk to consumers from involuntary exposure to a potential human carcinogen.

Sounding the call for drastic action after years of unfruitful Congressional debate and federal delay in exercising existing pollution control authorities to stop the PCB's problem, the Interior official noted, "The irony of our position today is that our left hand is spending millions of dollars and thousands of man-years to establish a crucial resource while our right hand renders each new growth of this resource malignant. Our new resource will not only self-destruct but can place the human population in mortal danger."

"Quite frankly," Reed stated, "I am thoroughly disgusted by the gnashing of teeth, waiting and rubbing of hands. To the agencies which have the enforcement responsibilities, a word on behalf of the bewildered but concerned American people — GET ON WITH IT!"

GOVERNMENT CUTS ENERGY CONSUMPTION 24 PERCENT

The federal government has cut its consumption of energy an average of 24.5 percent over the last two years, reports the Federal Energy Administration. That exceeds the national goals of seven percent savings in the first year of the conservation program begun in July 1973 and 15 percent in the second year. The energy saved is the equivalent of 164 million barrels of oil that would have cost \$1.4 billion, says FEA Administrator Frank Zarb.

According to the Federal Energy Management Program's Third Quarter Report for fiscal year 1975, energy consumption by federal agencies over a 21 month period dropped 28 percent for the third quarter compared with the same period last year — the equivalent of 27.5 million barrels of oil that would have cost about \$255 million. About 19 percent of these savings were achieved in the operation of government vehicles and equipment; nine percent in buildings and facilities operations.

The savings have nationwide significance, for the federal government alone uses almost three percent of all energy used in the United States. The findings are developed from reports made by 26 agencies which account for 99 percent of all energy used by the federal government. Even more important is the fact that the federal program proves that energy conservation can make a difference.

Measures used by the government included: lowering heating and raising air conditioning temperatures; reducing the operating time and increasing the efficiency of machines; lowering lighting intensities where acceptable; cutting back on the use of autos which use gasoline inefficiently; reducing driving speed; reducing driving of government vehicles; and reducing firing and steaming times for government plants and ships.