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PCB Levels Dip In Coho Salmon

Decline Is First In Five Years

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Levels of PCB in Lake Michigan coho salmon have decreased for the first time since monitoring began five years ago, the state department of natural resources said Thursday.

"This could mean our efforts are paying off, that PCB is on the way out," William Turney, DNR protection bureau chief, said.

Before restrictions on the sale of polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) in 1974, chemicals of the group were commonly used to absorb heat in capacitors, transformers, and hydraulic fluids. PCB also was used as an additive in carbonless reproduction papers.

Monsanto, Inc., the U.S. manufacturer of PCB, restricted sales of the chemical after officials determined that it posed a health hazard.

Mr. Turney said a September report by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service showed PCB levels in adult salmon taken last fall from east-central Lake Michigan at 9.21 parts per million compared with 10.77 ppm measured in a similar catch from the same area in 1976.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has established 5 ppm as the maximum allowable concentration of PCB in food for human consumption.

The report also lists PCB level declines in Lake Michigan chubs and lake trout.

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