TOXIC POLLUTANT DECLINES IN LAKE MICHIGAN SALMON

LANSING, Mich., Oct. 1 (AP)—In what may be the start of a new trend, the amount of a toxic pollutant known as PCB found in Lake Michigan coho salmon has decreased for the first time since monitoring of the chemical began in 1972.

"This could mean our efforts are paying off, that PCB is on the way out," said William Turney, chief of the protection bureau of the state Department of Natural Resources, which reported the decrease Thursday.

That would be good news for sports fishermen and fish eaters, who have been advised to restrict their consumption of some lake fish because of concentrations of polychlorinated biphenyl, or PCB. Until 1971, when officials said that the chemical was a health hazard, it was widely used to absorb heat in capacitors, transformers and hydraulic fluids.

Mr. Turney said a September report by the Fish and Wildlife Service showed PCB levels in adult salmon taken last fall from east-central Lake Michigan at 9.21 parts per million, as against 10.77 parts per million measured in a similar catch from the same area in 1975. The Food and Drug Administration has established 5 parts per million as the maximum allowable concentration of PCB in food for human consumption.