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Fish To Be Killed In 5 Park Lakes

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All fish in five St. Louis park lakes will be destroyed and removed from the lakes because recently stocked carp contain dangerous levels of a toxic industrial chemical, the Missouri Department of Conservation announced today.

The lakes will be restocked about two weeks after the fish are removed, a department official said. Conservation Department workers will begin poisoning the lakes early Friday morning.

The two lakes at Willmore Park in south St. Louis and lakes in Fairground, O'Fallon and Hyde Parks are involved, said Charles A. Purkett, chief of the state fisheries division in Jefferson City.

Purkett warned that persons should not eat any fish found floating in the five lakes. The lakes will be closed and signs posted explaining the problem.

Inspectors for the federal Food and Drug Administration discovered excessively high levels of PCB (polychlorinated bipenyl), an industrial chemical made by the Monsanto Co. here, in sample fish tested from a shipment of carp out of Green Bay, Wis., bound for St. Louis.

The FDA had suspected abnormally high levels of PCB in the shipments from the Green Bay commercial fishery.

A Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources official said that the chemical might have come from the sewage of industrial plants nearby. The fish are taken from the bay at Green Bay near mouth nouth of the Fox River, a highly industrialized area. Wisconsin officials have ordered samples of carp off the live fish market for PCB level testing.

State authorities will hold hearings on the use of PCB in industrial processes, and the chemical may be banned in Wisconsin, Purkett said.

"We don't think people could eat enough of the fish to trigger toxic conditions," said Purkett. "But PCBs are cumulative, they build in the body and are eliminated very slowly. We're closing the lakes as a precautionary measure.

"We've had no indication that anyone

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has been made ill by eating the fish."

The shipments of carp, minus the test fish, arrived here last Thursday and the carp were stocked in the five lakes.

The FDA office in Minneapolis notified state and city officials last night of the PCB problem after tests had disclosed the presence of 50 parts of the chemical for every 1,000,000 parts of fish flesh. The maximum acceptable level of PCB, according to FDA guidelines, is five parts per 1,000,000.

The contaminated sample fish were taken from the truck by FDA inspectors as it left Green Bay on its way to St. Louis.

Danger signs were to be posted at the five lakes this afternoon. Fish will be skimmed from lake surfaces Friday morning as they die from the poisons.

An Urban Fishing Program is conducted in city park lakes by the state Conservation Department and the City Parks Department. Fish stocking under the program has been going on for several years.

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