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Chain O'Lakes Carp Test Clean; Announce Commercial Fishing

CHICAGO - Carp in the Chain O'Lakes have been given a clean bill of health for commercial fishing, the Illinois Department of Conservation announced.

Commercial fishing for rough fish in four of the Chain's lakes will thus be allowed between April 1 and October 15, and a harvest of between three and four million pounds is expected, said Gary Erickson, fishery biologist for the Department.

Erickson said that test levels in 18 carp taken from Grass and Pistakee Lakes in the Chain showed only minor concentrations of PCBs, kieldrin and aldrin. He said the low levels are particularly good news because such contaminants tend to accumulate more in scavengers like the carp than in sport fish like bluegill or crappie.

No more than .4 parts per million PCBs was found in the carp, Erickson said. Levels of dieldrin reached only .01 parts per million and aldrin showed .007 to .038 ppm. PCBs are widely-used industrial chemicals suspected of causing cancer and other health problems. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has set a limit of 5 parts per million PCBs in food, while the FDA dieldrin/aldrin limit is 3.3 ppm. The latter are toxic pesticides.

Testing was done by the Illinois Dept of Public Health and the FDA.

Fishing will be restricted in Grass, Pistakee, Nippersink and Fox Lakes to eight commercialmen who will be required to obtain licenses from the Department of Conservation, have at least 1,000 feet of seine or 500 feet of trammel netting.

No commercial fishing will be allowed on the Fox River itself, nor in Mineola and Stanton Bays in Fox Lake, or in connecting waterways, Erickson said.

Applications to fish will be accepted after March 1, and will be granted on a first come, first served basis. Equipment minimums have been established, Erickson said, because last year too many amateurs were involved, with only 4,000 pounds taken. Many of the carp will be live-shipped to central and southern Illinois fee fishing areas; others will go to eastern markets.

Commercial fishermen interested in fishing the Chain O'Lakes should contact the Department of Conservation Region 2 office near Chain O'Lakes State Park, at 110 James Road, Spring Grove, phone 815-675-2385.

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