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Outdoor Life in the LAND OF BLACK HAWK

by GAZETTE columnist

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IN OUR APRIL 7 column we reported that the Outboard Marine Corp. (makers of Evinrude and Johnson motors) discharged more than 100,000 pounds of PCB's into tributaries of Lake Michigan before the Environmental Protection Agency stopped them in 1977.

The Outboard Marine Corp. recently applied for a permit from EPA to allow them to discharge what the OMC calls very minute concentrations of PCB's into its storm water run-off. Many conservation organizations including the Lake Michigan Federation is fighting that permit application, and is also urging EPA to make OMC pay for the massive PCB's pollution that has already occurred.

ON APRIL 21, a story appeared on the front page of this newspaper revealing that about 129 miles of the Sheboygan River and two of its tributaries—the Union River and the Mullet River—are also polluted with the highet concentrations of PCB's yet found in Wisconsin waters. The article stated that state officials warned fishermen not to eat any of the fish caught in the three rivers because of "extremely high" PCB contamination!

State officials claim that the source of the PCB's contamination was not immediately certain. Polychlorinated biphenyls (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, according to the Department of the Interior.

In 1970, the problem was thought to be resolved when Monsanto Corp., 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.

It should be a simple task for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to contact the Monsanto Corp.



Salmon with PCB's

and find out what industry on the Sheboygan River is purchasing their PCB's. If the state and federal agencies were really serious about stopping the contamination of fish and birds that eat the fish, all they have to do is ban the manufacture of the PCB's just as they banned DDT.

THE DEPARTMENT of the Interior claims that fish are not alone in absorbing sizable quantities of PCB's. The birds are equally susceptible. Water fowl carry the highest residues.

It doesn't make sense to pour millions of dollars into hatcheries to raise salmon and trout to stock into Lake Michigan if they are to be contaminated by PCB's so people can't eat them. Millions of public dollars were spent to control the sea lamprey in the Great Lakes which has enabled a federal restocking program involving 150 million lake trout, spake, coho salmon, chinook salmon, Atlantic salmon, plus millions of rainbow, brook and brown trout.

According to Nathaniel Reed of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the resulting sport fishing of these salmon and trout, when combined with the existing sport fisheries on other species, contributes approximately $350 million annually to the Great Lakes states and the Province of Ontario.

Money spent on stocking fish is public money, and the contaminated rivers and lakes belong to the public, therefore the public can and should demand that PCB's and other poison chemicals be banned before everything wild, including birds, animals and fish, won't be fit to eat.