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State Warns of PCB in Lake Fish

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Journal Madison Bureau

Madison, Wis. — The Department of Natural Resources, on the advice of the Division of Health, suggested Friday that consumption of trout and salmon over 24 inches long from Lake Michigan be limited because of large quantities of the industrial chemical PCB.

The warning also applied to fish from the upper Mississippi River between Prescott and lower Lake Pepin and the Fox River from Portage north to the Marquette County line.

The federal Food and Drug Administration has set a public health action level of five parts per million of PCB in interstate commerce.

Recognizing that some larger fish in these waters contain more PCB than that, the DNR said the Division of Health recommended that sports fishermen be advised from eating more than one meal a week of such fish and that pregnant women and children be cautioned to limit their intake to one average size serving of such fish per week.

The State Department of Agriculture has announced that it will seize any fish offered for commercial sale containing more than five parts per million of PCB. Lake trout over 24 inches caught by commercial fishermen in Lake Michigan incidental to their other netting operation no longer may be sold for human consumption.

The DNR will provide samples for testing.

PCB (polychlorinated biphenyls) is structurally similar to DDT. Like DDT, it concentrates in fats of fish and animals and tends to persist in the environment. It may enter the air through vaporizing or burning.

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