92-2 AUDUBON
E.O.M. 275,000

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1975

PCBs

• The enthusiasm which greeted Monsanto Company's recent announcement that it planned to cease the manufacture of toxic polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) has been dampened by the firm's hesitancy to set a timetable. Faced with growing public health fears and a possible fall ban on discharges into the Hudson River by General Electric, its biggest PCB customer, Monsanto announced the phase-out but then equivocated. "Our customers will have to decide whether and when the alternatives to PCBs are satisfactory," said William Papageorge, Monsanto's manager of product acceptability. "Optimistically, the earliest we could cease PCB use in transformers would be three years."

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation thinks otherwise, but it remains to be seen whether it will be allowed to flex its legal muscles. During recent hearings that found General Electric violated two state water quality standards by discharge of PCBs into the Hudson, Commissioner Ogden R. Reid ordered the dumping stopped by September 30th. Governor Hugh L. Carey later announced, however, that New York would give GE until June 1, 1977, to cut its PCB discharges to 3.5 ounces a day. The company now dumps about two pounds a day.

The New York hearings also produced a surprising turnabout. A General Electric expert witness testified that PCB levels in Hudson River fish were well within the Food and Drug Administration's tolerance limit of five parts per million, a figure criticized as excessively high. But it was later disclosed that PCB levels in fish taken near the GE discharge site were considerably higher—up to 1,328 ppm in one test. General Electric then publicly disassociated itself from its own testimony, noting that "the reliability of the data is extremely doubtful."

(See "Of PCB ppms from GE . . ." by Robert H. Boyle, AUDUBON, November 1975.)

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now are reproducing at near-normal rates, except possibly in tidewater Virginia and along the Potomac River. They have adapted to man-made nesting structures and their future looks generally good.

Great Lakes region: Declines were comparable to the North Atlantic coast, and recovery in Wisconsin appears comparably slow. The outlook for Michigan is good, and reproduction in Minnesota is normal.

Western North America: Production is near normal except in Yellowstone National Park. Many ospreys have colonized new reservoirs, so there may be more of the birds in the West than ever before. Their future appears good.

"Ten years ago," Henny adds, "researchers were predicting the year the last osprey would die in certain regions. Now that the losses from environmental pollutants have been partially controlled and certain areas are beginning to be managed with the osprey in mind, we can look with less gloom at the species' future."

(See "The jury is still out" by Frank Graham Jr., AUDUBON, November 1973.)

Reserve Mining

• **Despite reams of testimony** from hundreds of medical, environmental, scientific, and legal witnesses in hearings now drawing to a close, no solution is in view to America's longest-running environmental controversy. The principal judge has been removed from the case. The litigants continue at odds. Meanwhile, many of the 100,000 residents of Duluth and other communities near Reserve Mining Company's profitable iron ore processing plant at Silver Bay, Minnesota, are hauling filtered water home for cooking and drinking. Their customary water supply, taken from Lake Superior, has been contaminated by asbestoslike fibers—which may

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