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The environment

Chemical lake pollutant cutback urged

by LEA TONKIN

The cleanup of Lake Michigan's polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs will take at least five years.

That's the prediction of Richard Robbins, the new director of the Lake Michigan Federation in Chicago. Commenting on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Monday request for a voluntary cutback in the use of PCBs, Robbins said industrial users will use alternative materials or face a likely federal crackdown on PCB use.

Consumers are affected by the pollutant when they eat Lake Michigan fish, Robbins said. The chemical's adverse impact on fish reproductive cycles is a warning sign, he said.

Robbins called for public support of the proposed federal Toxic Substances Control Act. "It's probably the solution for the PCBs," he said. The bill would require the federal EPA to test the long-range effects of all new chemicals before they are used by industry. The PCBs are used in printing inks, electrical transformers, plastics and other products. EPA administrator Russell Train said he will meet with representatives of PCB manufacturers and users to urge the use of PCB substitutes.

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TOXIC SUBSTANCES handling regulations will be considered Jan. 7 at an Illinois Pollution Control Board hearing in Chicago. The 10 a.m. session will be at the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle Campus.

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OLD COAT HANGERS, hubcaps, wooden salad bowls and onion bags are among the discarded household items that can be fashioned into winter bird feeding stations. George H. Harrison, field editor for National Wildlife Magazine, said homemade feeders and a pool of water will attract birds of many species. Most birds eat beef suet, Harrison said in an article included in the magazine's current issue. He advises, "If you want to save in on finches, nuthatches, chickadees, grosbeaks, redpolls and crossbills, stick to 100 per cent sunflower seeds."

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THOUSANDS OF wild beasts in Panama will be rescued from flooded areas, under a program launched this week by the International Society for the Protection of Animals. John Walsh, coordinator of the society's Project Noah, said some 3,000 to 4,000 animals will be captured and released into nature parks. Without help, he said, the animals could be downed as a planned 300-square-mile reservoir is flooded. The society hopes to raise the $50,000 to $65,000 needed for the operation through donations.

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SOUTH CAROLINA recently gained a new wildlife management area, thanks to the Union Camp Corp. The company donated 1,700-acre Turtle Island to the Nature Conservancy, which transferred it to the State of South Carolina. The gift is the first in a "land legacy program," said Alexander Calder Jr., chairman and chief executive officer of the New Jersey firm. The South Carolina barrier island is valued at more than $400,000.



WATER POLLUTION cleanup will take at least five years, as the cutback in polychlorinated biphenyls usage begins.