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Carp From Pepin Exceed PCB Limit

ST. PAUL (AP) — Consumption of fish taken from Lake Pepin should be limited to one meal a week, according to the Minnesota Health Department, because of high concentration of an industrial chemical.

A department spokesman said Wednesday that some carp shipments from Lake Pepin contained 14 parts per million of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), which exceeds the U.S. Food and Drug Administration maximum of five parts per million in fish. If consumed in heavy concentrations, PCBs are suspected of damaging human internal organs and causing skin lesions and birth defects.

The warning followed an earlier halt to commerical fishing for carp and other rough fish in the lake, near Red Wing and Wabasha, and on the Mississippi River as far north as Minneapolis-St. Paul.

Commercial fishing on Lake Pepin and upstream has stopped and the report that game fish are also affected is expected to hurt resort business in the area.

"I doubt that we'll have much of a business, at least for fishing," said Darrell Strain, a resort owner at Lake City. "Of course, we're still in the boating and sailing business. . .but people come here to fish."

Another resort operator on the lake, Gordon Redalen, said he has already received cancellations.

"It irritates the hell out of me that they made me put in a septic tank for the runoff from my minnow tank," he said. "Then they allow this to happen right at the beginning of the season."

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