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Don't Eat Wild Ducks College Professor Warns

HUDSON - A Columbia Greene Community College biology professor has warned against eating wild ducks taken in the area because of possible high levels of polychlorinated biphenals (PCB).

Ron Payson said the high levels of PCB in the Hudson River, which resulted in a warning by Environmental Conservation Commissioner Ogden Reed against human consumption of Hudson River fish, "may have permeated the food chain."

He said that "chances are good" that migratory birds, including ducks, will have a high level of the chemical (discharged by industrial plants) in their bodies and be unsafe for consumption.

Payson said the Department of Environmental Conservation was conducting tests of river fowl but noted that the findings would not be reported until after duck season began, Oct. 1.

Payson said duck hunters should hunt as usual but suggested that they keep their catch under refrigeration until the DEC findings were released.

He also said that other animals, such as mink, muskrats and otters could be contaminated with PCB from eating river fish

Payson, a member of the Hudson River Sloop Club of Hudson, said a rally was being planned in Albany to "draw attention to the PCB problem." He said the club planned to have "between 80 and 100 people in canoes and row boats" converge in Albany Oct. 1. "It sounds alarmist," Payson said of his warning, "but this PCB

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situation is such a damn ridiculous thing."

The effects of PCB consumption on humans has not been determined but according to Glenn Schweitzer, director of the Office of Toxic Substances of the Environmental Protection Agency, concentrations of the chemical as low as 2.5 and 5 parts per million in monkeys has caused loss of hair, irregularities in menstrual cycles, impaired ability to maintain pregnancy and skin infection. Proponents of the use of PCB in electrical manufacturing have claimed that effects on humans have not been determined. (dk)

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