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FYI -- In case you have not already seen this article in today's Globe-Democrat.

Chemical Pollutant Endangers Young of Birds and Animals

PCB Has DDT Effects; Results From Burning Plastics

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By WILLIAM HINES

WASHINGTON — A chemical you'll be hearing more about has been found in the nation's waterways, according to a Cornell University scientist. It's known by its initials, PCB, and is a byproduct of the combustion of plastics in incinerators and other open fires.

PCB has many of DDT's effects when it gets into an animal's system, says ecologist David B. Peakall. This means bad news for birds particularly, because research has shown that DDT and similar chemicals cause female birds to lay eggs with shells that are deficient in calcium, and therefore not rigid enough to protect the developing embryo until hatching time.

Peakall has found that both DDT and PCB act up reactions in the bird's liver which alter the sex hormone, estrogen. These substances, in addition to turning on and off the female's receptivity to advances by the male, also regulate the use of calcium for eggshell.

Human beings and other mammals bear their young alive—except for the strange duckbill platypus, but that's another story—yet Peakall believes PCB may also have adverse effects on the reproductive functions of the higher animals.

DEEPER AND DEEPER—former astronaut-aquanaut M. Scott Carpenter says there's more of interest to explorers on the sea floor than on the Moon, and urges an intensification of undersea research.

Speaking here recently, Carpenter said man is now on the threshold of the ability to work in "wet suit" freedom at depths up to 1,000 feet. At really great depths, however, he acknowledges, explorers will need the protection of deep-submersible vessels.

One of the big problems today is communication between divers and surface crews and between individual men working on the bottom, Carpenter says. At depths of several hundred feet, divers cannot use the normal nitrogen-oxygen mixture which comprises air, but must rely on a gas combination that is about 99 per cent helium and 1 per cent oxygen. Helium doesn't affect bodily processes, but it does distort the diver's speech, creating a "Donald Duck" tone of voice that is difficult to understand. Research is needed, Carpenter says, to provide some sort of "unscrambling" system that will correct this condition.

The former astronaut (Mercury 7 in 1962) and aquanaut (SeaLab II in 1965) is now president of the Helium Society, an organization of firms with commercial interests involving that gaseous element.

MEDICAL BOOK GROWS—A medical "bible" that was hardly more than a pamphlet in its first edition half a century ago has just appeared in its latest revision, a yellow-and-red-covered some 300 pages thick that catalogs some of the worst ills that flesh is heir to.

It's the American Public Health Association's 1970 edition of "Control of Communicable Diseases in Man," which laymen are sure to find as interesting as doctors will find useful. The book covers a spectrum of 117 diseases ranging (alphabetically) from actinomycosis to yaws. Most of the diseases are not native to the United States, but in this time of rapid air travel many ailments once considered "exotic" turn up in stateside doctors' practices.

Inquiries about the book and how to get it may be made to the American Public Health Association, 1740 Broadway, New York City.

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