DES PLAINES, ILL.
JOURNAL
W. CIRC. N. AVAIL.

DEC 4 1975

Des Plaines Outdoors



by BOB MAMOSER

A pall of gloom has settled over those anglers who pursue the salmon and trout in Lake Michigan with the announcement by officials of the U.S. Department of The Interior that large salmon and lake trout are carrying dangerously high levels of PCB (Polychlorinated Bi Phynyls), a very persistent chemical substance within their body tissues and thus, according to these spokesmen, are unfit for human consumption!

These official pronouncements were made at a recent symposium on pollution in the Great Lakes at Chicago's Pick-Congress Hotel. The news that Lake Michigan salmon contain levels of PCB higher than the 5.0 ppm level set by the FDA came as a shock to many fishermen who were unaware of this situation. This revelation was not the first statement on PCB in Lake Michigan fish but when the federal government puts its weight behind its statement, suddenly the situation becomes frightening!

For some time now both the Michigan and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources have been advising fishermen who fish the big lake to fillet their fish, remove all body fat and eat their salmon and trout no more than once a week. The PCB bomb shell is sure to have a devastating effect on future salmon fishing in Lake Michigan and on the 350 million dollars a year industry that is supported by it.

The recent symposium, in discussing the PCB situation, ended on the note that it would recommend the discontinuance of manufacture of import of PCB for all industries except the electrical one.

PCB has wide use in a number of industries, especially the electrical where its insulating properties are in wide demand. The problem is that the PCB apparently leaches out of cast-off electrical components; finds its way into rivers and then into the big lake where it is then taken into the food chain and eventually winds up in the tissues of salmon and trout. Since PCB is fat soluble only, it lodges in the fish's fat cells and, being very persistent, does not deteriorate. Even cooking seems to have little effect on PCB.

Many, many questions remain unanswered and should be resolved for the protection and peace of mind of fishermen and their families. For instance, is the PCB level unacceptable only in large fish? Are smaller fish safe to eat if properly prepared? Do brown and rainbow trout contain as high elvels of PCB as do salmon and lake trout? Are there any other, safer ways to prepare the fish? Also, and most important, how dangerous is PCB to humans and if so, at what levels of concentration?

Since PCB is found in Lake Michigan fish, it surely must also be present in large river fish as well. Does the government's announcement doom all fishing except in small ponds and what is the federal government going to do to protect the health and safety of millions of fishermen!!!

MONS 033180