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No PGB Problem

LANSING — The Siscowet or "fat" strain of lake trout, recently publicized as containing high levels of the chemical compound PCBs, is seldom part of a Lake Superior sports fisherman's catch since it lives in the deeper lake waters, according to the Department of Natural Resources.

DRN biologist John Hesse said PCBs in the "lean" variety of lake trout found in Lake Superior waters fall well below the five-parts-per-million guideline for human consumption set by the Food and Drug Administration.

Numerous phone calls to the DNR's Upper Peninsula field offices indicate that Hesse's recent status report on PCB fish samplings has stimulated "undue alarm" about sports fishing in Lake Superior, Hesse said. The Siscowet, which lives in very deep lake waters, has more contaminat-storing fatty tissue, Hess explained. Lake Superior fish samples taken from the Wisconsin border to Grand Marais have turned up Siscowet containing PCBs above the 5 ppm level.

However, concentrations in the Siscowet strain are somewhat lower than in Lake Michigan lake trout, where a health warning against consumption more than once a week is in effect, Hesse reported.

Studies by the Michigan Department of Public Health to date have failed to reveal any correlation between health symptoms and PCB levels among people regularly eating the Lake Michigan fish.

The compund PCBs should not be confused with PBB which has been involved in cattle feed in Michigan. PCBs are most often used in electrical transformers and brake fluid.

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