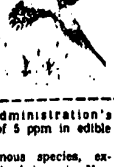
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The Free State Sportsman



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With the hunting season upon us and Maryland's required hunter safety courses for some hunters, many prospective hunters are looking for some place to enroll and perhaps to do a bit of shooting prior to the season.

With that in mind perhaps the Thurmont Conservation and Sportsman's Club has just what is needed. From now through November their program calls for hunter safety courses, rifle club matches, hunter sight-in, turkey and ham shoots, hunter rifle bench rest match series, class and equipment identifications, different courses for varmint and heavy hunters, and trap and rifle championships.

With all of these in mind interested persons should contact that club for additional information and a schedule of events. Call 663-8379 or 898-9093. The club is located off Old Frederick Road, Route 350. Turn off Route 15 and go East for seven miles to the club sign.

The annual Waterfowl Festival in Easton will be held on November 11,12,and 13. This years festival will be the largest yet presented and will include additional art and carving exhibits plus the Mason Dixon Goose and Duck Calling Contest to establish regional champions from Long Island to North Carolina. Additional information will be forthcoming in future columns.

According to the latest issue of the SFI Bulletin, published by The Sport Fishing Institute, Washington D.C., Polychlorinated Biphenyls in the aquatic environment have reached concentrations that exceed the current Food and Drug Administration's guidelines of 5 ppm in edible fish.

Anadromous species, especially striped bass in New York and New Jersey, water, have also exceeded the guidelines. The highest single level reported for ocean species was 1.8 ppm, well below the guidelines and that most ocean going species contain only small or traces amounts of PCB'S.

Of all the past and proposed regulatory actions, only the recent FDA proposal to reduce the PCB's "action level" from 5 ppm to 2 ppm (following simular action by Canada this year) may be expected to have adverse impact on recreational fisheries interest, ostensibly affecting only the commercial sale of fishes.

The report continues to state that it is nevertheless conceivable, even likely, that recreational fishing will be substantially affected. Well-intentioned publicity associated with the attempt to lower the PCB's "action level" have undoubtedly generated undue public health alarm among anglers (even through unwarrented by the facts), which may discourage fu ture angler participation.

The report says that another spin-off may result in actual closures of specific waters containing fish species with high PCB'a levels, implimented by ill-advised state public health agencies. Alternatively, and of almost equally adverse impact on fishing participation, a variety of catch-and release regulations may be imposed prohibiting the possession of PCB's tainted species.

According to the report the critical research problem with respect to PCB's seems to be centered in human toxicology, rather than in fisheries biology or in water quality. What is most needed is a body of information about toxicity to humans, especially their long-term low-level effects.

The report also states that it seems probable that a broad range of actions might well be feasible to help bring the problem of PCB's under control, short of following Canada's arbitrary action, which would provide a desirable level of improved protection to public health and recommends as follows:

Urge immediate establishment by EPA of zero discharge standards for PCB's as part of all effluent-discharge permits, including those already issued as well as those under consideration and to be issued in the future.

Urge immediate banning by appropriate federal action of all production, importation, recycling, and sale of PCB's under the new authority of the Toxic Substances Control Act, and compel the immediate phasing out of use and safe disposal of PCB's already in use, specifically the collection and disposal of discarded equipment and devices containing these chemicals.

Advise anglers that the problem of PCB's is greater in fish from waters near centers of heavy industry and that they should, therefore, avoid the consumption of fish from known areas of high-levels PCB's contamination, especially fatty-type fishes (for example, authorities have cited both Lake Michigan and the Hudson River in this context, coho salmon, other salmon and trout, and striped bass for these waters have been shown to be especially contaminated.)

Further advise anglers that little danger exists of PCB's contamination of fish caught from other areas, but that they can minumize the problem of possible exposure from allf ish before cooking, and by eating no more than one meal of fish weekly, or less, the report said.

The above SFI recommendations seem to be a stop-gap measure to permit the continued enjoyment and harvest of the species in our polluted waters and at the same time maintain some degree of health.

That same report states that the same chemical properties of extreme stability that recommended the use of PCB's for industrial usage also presaged their eventual enviromental ubiquity or universal presence. However, as has happened so often in the past, it was not until many millions of pounds and some 30 years after production was begun in 1930 that the first hint of possible enviromental contamination by PCB's was suspected. These suspicions were aroused initially by the discovery of interfering compounds which closely mimicked DDT by scientists analying conjectured DDT-contaminsted fish samples from the Baltic Sea.

The report points out that PCB's may enter the aquatic environment through a variety of sources, such as vaporization and subsequent fallout, run-off from sewage sludge disposal areas, direct discharge of industrial and municipal sewage waste (both treated and non-treated), and accidental spills. The highest levels have been found in highly industrialized river basins east of the Mississippi River.

Bottom sediments may contain concentrations many times higher than occur in the overlying water. Fish may accumulate PCB's by direct absorption from water and from food consumption. Bioaccumulation processes may result in concentrations in fish flesh that are many thousands of times greater than found in water. Because PCB's are much more soluable in fats than in water, the bulk of PCB's are concentrated in fatty tissues.

Prior to 1970, the five largest uses of PCB's were for dielectric fluids in capacitors, plasticiser applications, transformer fluids, hydrolic fluids, and lubricants, and for heat transfer fluids. Current usage is restricted primarily to capacitors and transformers, the report says.

According to that bulletin well over 500 million pounds of PCB's have been manufactured by Monsanto since 1930. Foreign imports, primarily from Italy and France, historically have amounted to less than two per cent of domestic production. It is estimated that a minium of 140 million pounds of PCB's may still be available for biological activity today, after accounting for natural dissipative forces and the quantities destroyed via incineration.

PCB's are highly stabel nonflammable compounds which are extremely resistant to heat, acids, alkalis and other toxic chemicals. The chemical can only be destroyed by incineration at 2,400 degrees, F., the report said.

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