

## State Issues Warnings On Eating Sport Fish

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ALBANY, April 22 — Concerned about increased concentrations of PCB's in fish, the State Department of Health issued warnings today on eating sport fish that one environmentalist described as a "better safe than sorry" approach.

The Health Department said most people should not eat more than half a pound a week of fish taken from any freshwater body in the state, including the Hudson River and New York Harbor. It added that women of child-bearing age and children under 15 should not eat any fish taken from any contaminated body of water.

In its annual advisory to recreational anglers, the department extended its warnings to new areas, including a Nassau County pond and five lakes in the Adirondacks.

### A Conservative Approach

An expert on water pollution, John Cronin, who works for the Hudson Riverkeeper Fund, an environmental group, said the warnings issued today by the state were similar to what appears on fishing licenses. Mr. Cronin said little was new, but said, "It's so shocking that every year it sounds new to somebody."

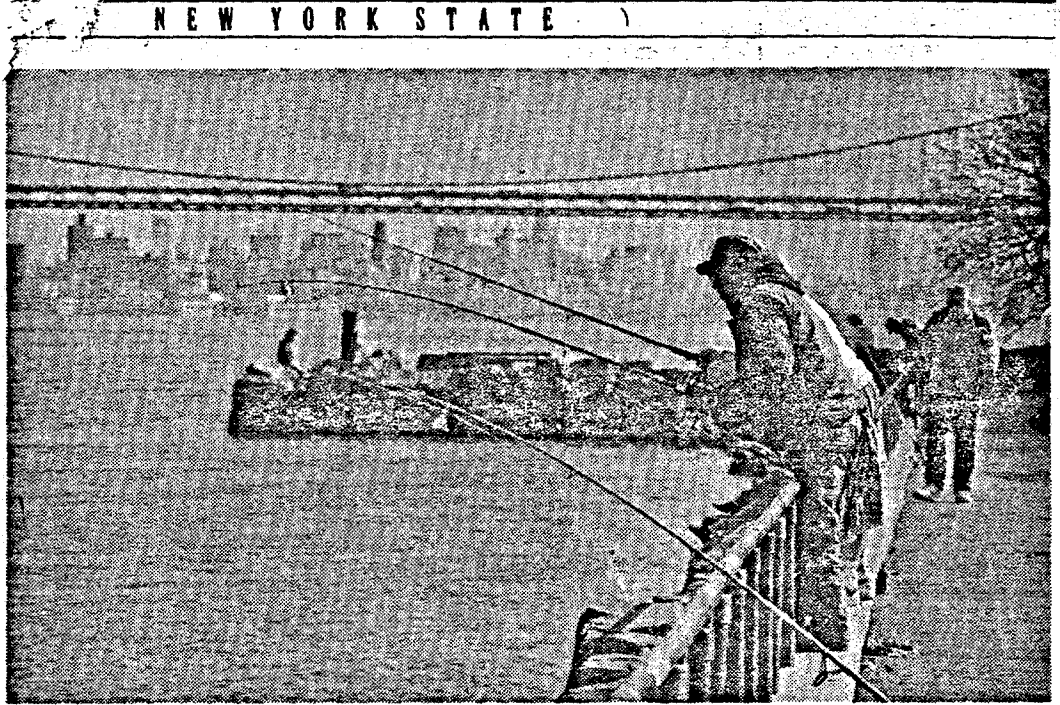
Mr. Cronin, whose job is called riverkeeper, said the state has not tested extensively, and instead has taken the conservative approach of telling people to limit their consumption, to be "better safe than sorry."

Ever since 1975, when PCB's (polychlorinated biphenyls) were first discovered in the Hudson, the state has banned commercial fishing and sale of the river's most prolific fish, the striped bass, and restricted fishing for it by both commercial fishing operators and anglers.

The only commercial exceptions to the ban are sturgeon and American shad, fish that live in the ocean and swim into the river at this time of year to spawn. Because of their short time in the river, they pick up little of the PCB pollution.

The department offered different advice for two sections of the Hudson River, warning people not to eat any fish except American shad in the Hudson River between Troy and the Rip Van Winkle Bridge between Catskill and Hudson.

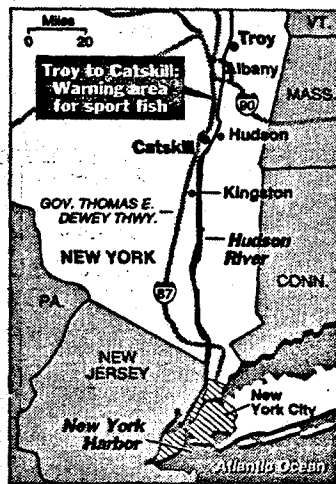
For most species caught in a larger zone, between Catskill and New York Harbor, the department recommend-



Norman V. Lono for The New York Times

The State Department of Health issued warnings yesterday advising people not to eat more than a half-pound of fish per week from any freshwater

body in the state, including New York Harbor and the Hudson River. Harry Dalton fished in the Hudson from the Palisades Park in New Jersey.



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The state said that American shad were the only fish safe to eat from a section of the Hudson River.

ed a more relaxed standard of not more than one meal a week of any of five fish: shad, blueback herring, bluegills, pumpkinseed and yellow perch. For the first time, the department reported dangerously high levels of chlordane in Whitney Pond in Nassau County, of mercury in five

Adirondack lakes, and of PCB's in the Mohawk River and in 18-Mile Creek in Niagara County.

The findings were not based on new or increased contamination but on studies in bodies of water that had not been covered before, according to Lawrence Skinner, a fish expert in the State Department of Environmental Protection. The department does the chemical analyses on which the advisories are based.

A significant new finding, the Health Department said, was of high PCB levels in fish caught in 18-Mile Creek, ranging from 2.5 to 15.1 parts per million. The department considers anything above 2 parts per million to be dangerous.

It said the source of the pollution was under investigation by the Department of Environmental Conservation.

The department warned the public against eating any fish caught in the creek, although the findings covered only black crappies, channel catfish, large mouth bass, northern pike, rock bass, walleye and white suckers.

New data showed elevated levels of PCB's, from 5 to 16 parts per million, in carp from the Mohawk River near Utica and Little Falls, the department said. It issued a warning about carp from that area: "Eat none."

The new study found high chlordane levels — 0.35 parts per million, above the 0.3 parts per million allowed by Federal standards — in

carp from Whitney Park Pond in Nassau County. The department warned against eating more than one meal a month of carp or goldfish from the pond.

In the Adirondacks, the department reported elevated mercury levels, above the permitted one part per million, in yellow perch in five lakes: Big Moose Lake, Moshier Reservoir, Sunday Lake, Francis Lake and Half-moon Lake. It suggested no more than one meal a month of yellow perch from those lakes.

### Commercial Fish Unchanged

A spokesman, Peter Slocum, said that none of the new areas to which warnings were extended are places where fish is caught commercially. New York's only commercial fishery, he said, is in the Hudson River south of Poughkeepsie, and the advice in that area did not change.

At the New York State Restaurant Association, Fred G. Sampson, the president, said that hardly any fish from New York waters show up on restaurant tables.

"With the advent of jet freight and overnight deliveries, most of them are coming from out of state," he said.

Most fish on restaurant menus is not freshwater but salt water fish.

Mr. Sampson and other experts say the freshwater fish that does appear on menus often comes from out-of-state farms, not streams and lakes.