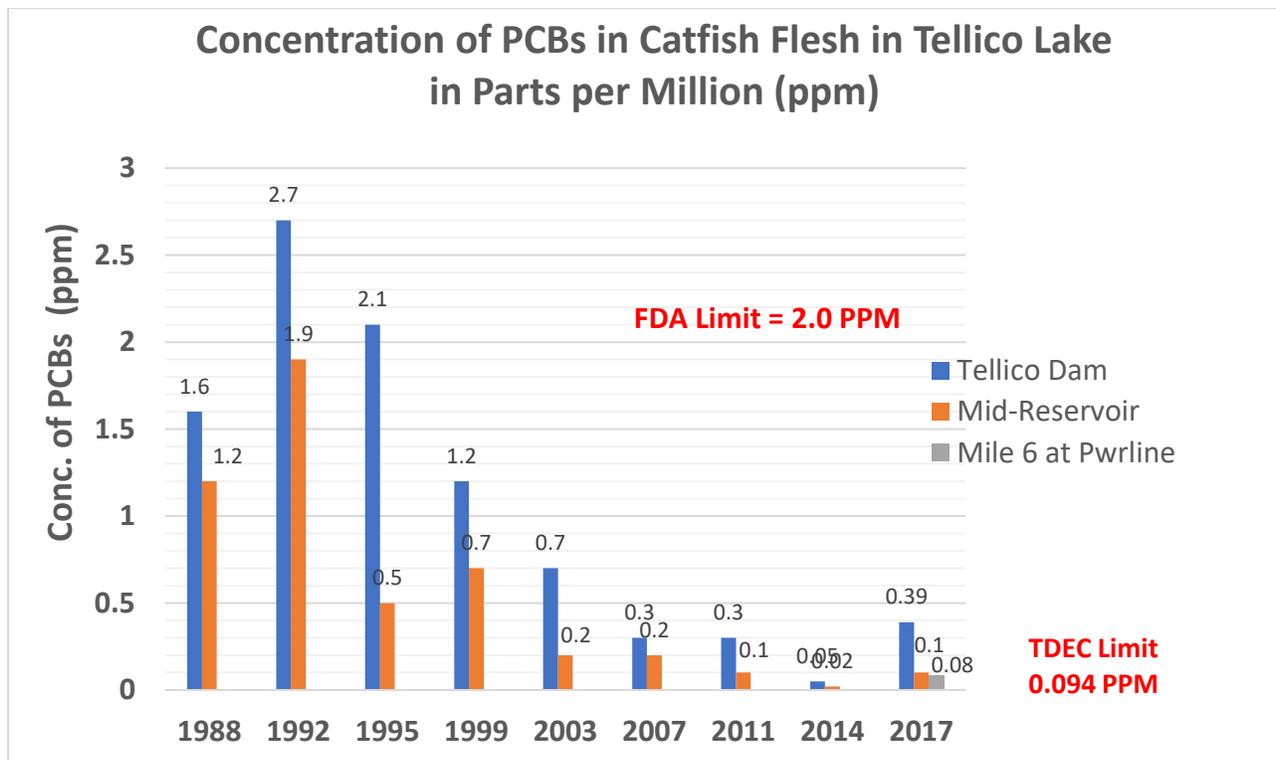


Tracking Progress of Diminishing PCB in Catfish

WATER is tracking data of PCBs in catfish of Tellico Lake with a goal of removing the Fish Consumption Advisory where and when laboratory analyses indicate it is safe to do so. Advisories on the entire lake may adversely affect industries and people looking to locate in this area. TDEC issued an advisory for eating catfish from Tellico Lake shortly after the lake was created by TVA in 1979 because of the level of PCB concentrations found in catfish. The primary and probably only source of this contaminant was discovered in Chilhowee Lake and removed in the mid-1980s. However, PCBs remain attached to sediment in the deepest portion of Tellico Lake. Catfish feed along the bottom and consume PCBs which concentrate in their flesh. The only pathway of concern to humans is by eating catfish with elevated levels of PCBs for decades.

TVA has been collecting catfish from Tellico Lake biannually for laboratory testing of PCBs since 1987 at two locations – downstream at Mile 1 near Tellico Dam, and mid-reservoir at Mile 15 near the Tellico West Industrial Park. WATER in cooperation with TVA has analyzed catfish near the TVA powerline crossing at Mile 6 for three years, 2016-2018. Results of the laboratory analyses are presented in the following graph:



Concentrations of PCBs in catfish have progressively decreased since reaching peak values in 1992. PCBs found in catfish near Tellico Dam have always been greater than those collected 14 miles upstream. The levels of PCBs currently exceed the limit for continuing the Advisory only near the dam. This is consistent with a pattern of contaminated sediment transported downstream by flow and accumulating in the deepest part of the lake near Tellico Dam. Clean sediment deposited over the contaminated sediment is slowly isolating the PCBs from the ecosystem. This explains the higher concentrations of PCBs in catfish near the dam and the steady decline at both sample locations. For details, see the WATER report *PCB Fish Consumption Advisory for Tellico Reservoir, February 2019 Revision*.

WATER is encouraging TDEC to limit the Advisory to only the region near the dam instead of continuing with the Advisory throughout the 16,500 acres of the entire lake.