**Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Lesson 3: Which fish should I eat?**

The Hudson River is a complicated ecosystem, and that makes deciding whether to eat fish complicated too! In this lesson, we will examine four species of fish: Striped bass, Catfish (channel and white), Brown bullhead, and Yellow perch.

**Part 1: Review Questions**

1. List the factors that can affect PCB concentrations in living organisms:

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1. Make a guess about which species will have the highest PCB concentrations, and which species will have the lowest, using your background knowledge of fish and the reading from Lesson 1. Give your highest species a #1, and your lowest species a #4. Be ready to defend your choice!

\_\_\_\_\_ Striped bass \_\_\_\_\_ Catfish \_\_\_\_ Yellow Perch \_\_\_\_ Brown Bullhead

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**Part 2: Species Cards**

You will receive a Species Information Card for one of the species above. Review the information in your small group, and be sure you understand all the information about your fish.

1. Calculate the average % lipid (fat) levels from the four years of data that are provided:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Then, fill out the graphic organizer below as your classmates share information about their fish:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yellow perch | Catfish | Striped bass | Brown bullhead |
| Size | □Small (<8 in)□Medium (8-20 in)□Large (>20 in) | □Small (<8 in)□Medium (8-20 in)□Large (>20 in) | □Small (<8 in)□Medium (8-20 in)□Large (>20 in) | □Small (<8 in)□Medium (8-20 in)□Large (>20 in) |
| Lifespan | □ < 9 years□ 9-20 years□ > 20 years | □ < 9 years□ 9-20 years□ > 20 years | □ < 9 years□ 9-20 years□ > 20 years | □ < 9 years□ 9-20 years□ > 20 years |
| Habitat | □Fresh□Brackish□Salty | □Fresh□Brackish□Salty | □Fresh□Brackish□Salty | □Fresh□Brackish□Salty |
| Life cycle | □Lives near "home"□Migrates long distances | □Lives near "home"□Migrates long distances | □Lives near "home"□Migrates long distances | □Lives near "home"□Migrates long distances |
| Feeding | □Primary and secondary consumer□Secondary only | □Primary and secondary consumer□Secondary only | □Primary and secondary consumer□Secondary only | □Primary and secondary consumer□Secondary only |
| Average % lipid: |  |  |  |  |
| Average % lipid category | □Low (< 1%)□Medium (1-5%)□High (> 5%) | □Low (< 1%)□Medium (1-5%)□High (> 5%) | □Low (< 1%)□Medium (1-5%)□High (> 5%) | □Low (< 1%)□Medium (1-5%)□High (> 5%) |
| Using this information, predict whether each fish species will have "low" or "high" levels of PCBs.  | □Low□High | □Low□High | □Low□High | □Low□High |
| Explain your reasoning for your choice. |  |  |  |  |

3. Which fish do you think will have the highest PCB concentration, given the situation(s) below? Circle your answer for each question.

* 1. You catch two fish: **a striped bass** and **a brown bullhead**. Based only on their feeding habits, which species do you think will have the higher PCB concentration?
	2. You catch two fish, **one that is 36 inches long** and **one that is 4 inches long**. Based only on their size, which fish do you think will have the higher PCB concentration?
	3. You catch two fish of the same size: **a catfish** and **a striped bass**. Based only on their migratory habits, which species do you think will have the higher PCB concentration?
	4. You catch two fish of the same size: **a catfish** and **a brown bullhead**. Based only on their % lipid levels, which do you think will have the higher PCB concentration?

**Part 3: PCB Data**

You will receive PCB data for your fish species for 2011. Select at least 15 data points and plot them as points above the name of your fish species. Be ready to share your results with the class. These fish were collected in Poughkeepsie and Catskill, NY.

Then, calculate an average for your data and mark it on the graph: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Part 4: Summarizing Results**

1. Why do you think there were differences between the PCB contamination levels in your fish species in 2011? Include at least two possible reasons.

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1. As a class, fill out the rest of your graph with data from other groups of the four fish species for 2011. Then, your teacher will make a bar graph of the averages for all species. Based on these graphs, which fish species has the highest PCB levels, and why?

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1. Here are data for all of the four fish species, for four years. These data are averages of multiple samples from each year, from all locations. The number of samples that were used to calculate each average is provided in the table:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | # samples 2001 | # samples 2005 | # samples 2008 | # samples 2011 |
| Catfish | 15 | 27 | 27 | 22 |
| Striped bass | 251 | 250 | 214 | 130 |
| Brown bullhead | 23 | 19 | 21 | 21 |
| Yellow perch | 52 | 19 | 20 | 19 |

a. Which species has the highest overall PCB contamination level (claim)? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

b. Given what you have learned in other lessons, what are some potential gaps of this dataset that might influence your claim?

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c. In order to be more confident in your claim, what else would you like to know?

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1. Your teacher will show you a graph of the average % lipid levels in the four fish species. Use these data to create a scientific argument (claim, evidence, & reasoning) for the relationship between PCB levels in fish and % lipid levels.

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1. Based on what you have learned, what do you think is the most important reason that species differ in their PCB contaminant level? Explain your reasoning.

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1. Based on this activity, do **you** now feel more or less comfortable eating fish from the Hudson River? Why or why not? If you are not comfortable, what else would you need to know in order to make a decision?

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