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**Water Quality Criteria for White Phosphorus**

Authors: [Kowetha A. Davidson](#); [Patricia S. Hovatter](#); [Catherine F. Sigmon](#); [OAK RIDGE NATIONAL LAB TN](#)

**Abstract:** Data obtained from a review of the literature concerning the environmental fate and aquatic and mammalian toxicity of **white phosphorus** are presented in order to derive Water Quality Criteria for the protection of humans and aquatic organisms and their uses. Laboratory and field studies indicate that **white phosphorus** is quite toxic to aquatic organisms, with fish being more sensitive than macroinvertebrates. In dynamic bioassays with fishes, bluegill was the most sensitive species. The most sensitive life stages for fathead minnow are 30 day old and 60 day old fry. Aquatic macroinvertebrates are more resistant. Bioaccumulation is rapid and extensive, with the greatest uptake in the liver and muscle of fish and the hepatopancreas of lobster; however, depuration occurs within 7 days postexposure. Other toxic effects to aquatic organisms include cardiovascular and histological changes.

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