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STS-5 (Space Transport System-5) Fish Kill, Kennedy Space Center, Florida

Authors: Joseph E. Milligan; Gene B. Hubbard; AIR FORCE OCCUPATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH LAB BROOKS AFB TX

Abstract: Since fish kills were observed following previous Space Transport System (STS) launches, the USAF Occupational and Environmental Health Laboratory was requested to conduct an on-site investigation of any possible fish kill associated with STS-5 on 11 November 1982. Due to the acuteness of the fish kills and close association with time of launch, STS exhaust products, such as HC1 and/or **aluminum oxide** were suspected as the cause. Other potential causes considered included diseases, parasites, mechanical interference with respiration, insufficient oxygen, trauma, temperature and pH changes, and exposure to other toxic substances. The conclusion was that the fish died from ionic imbalances and fatal anoxia resulting from severe gill damage caused by a rapid decrease in the water pH. The change in water pH was a transitory phenomenon and not perceived to be a long-term environmental threat.

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Limitations: APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE
Description: Final rept.
Pages: 28
Report Date: JAN 1983
Report Number: A859231

Keywords relating to this report:

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- *EXHAUST GASES
- *FISHES
- *ROCKET LAUNCHING
- *SPACE TRANSPORTATION
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