

Experimental Analysis

Part A – Read the paragraph and answer the questions about the article.

SCIENTISTS EXPLORE AN ASPECT OF FISH MIGRATION

Toxic pollutants from agriculture and industry have been found worldwide, even in areas that are far from pollution sources. Until now, scientists have blamed air currents for spreading toxins far from their sources. However, a recent study indicates that fish can transport toxins over long distances.

Scientists developed this hypothesis when toxins were mysteriously found in a remote lake in Sweden. A team of scientists from Lund University hypothesized that salmon accumulated and stored toxins in their fatty tissues when they were in the Baltic Sea. The salmon migrated upstream, spawned, and then died in the lake, releasing toxins as their bodies decomposed.

To test this hypothesis, the scientists traveled to Alaska, where they carried out an experiment in two neighboring lakes, Lower Fish Lake and Round Tangle Lake. Lower Fish Lake is open to migrating salmon, while Round Tangle Lake is closed to migrating salmon because of numerous waterfalls and rapids. A small fish, the arctic grayling, lives in both lakes. Fish eggs are a large part of its diet. When the scientists examined the arctic grayling from both lakes, the arctic grayling in Lower Fish Lake had more than twice the concentration of toxins in their bodies as the arctic grayling in Round Tangle Lake. Since both lakes are exposed to similar levels of air pollution, the difference in toxin levels found in the arctic grayling must be due to other factors.

In a related experiment, scientists caught salmon throughout their migration and tested their fatty tissues for toxins. Even though the fatty tissue deposits were gradually used up, toxin levels remained about the same throughout the 400-kilometer journey up the Copper River from the Gulf of Alaska to Lower Fish Lake. Instead of metabolizing the toxins, the salmon stored them in other body tissues that also contain fat, and in their eggs.

Both of these studies support the hypothesis that migrating salmon can transport pollutants to new areas.

1.) Identify the question that is being investigated by Lund University scientists.

2.) Write a possible hypothesis for this scientific question.

What is the Independent Variable _____? What is the Dependent Variable? _____