

DCS No. 05000333970124

January 24, 1997

**PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE** PNO-I-97-008

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information is as initially received without verification or evaluation, and is basically all that is known by Region I staff in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania on this date.

**Facility**

New York Power Authority  
James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Plant  
Oswego, New York  
Docket No.: 50-333  
License No.: DPR-59  
Event No: 31644

**Licensee Emergency Classification**

Notification of Unusual Event  
Alert  
Site Area Emergency  
General Emergency  
X Not Applicable

**Subject: REACTOR SCRAM AT THE FITZPATRICK NUCLEAR PLANT**

At 10:24 p.m. on January 23, 1997, a manual reactor scram was initiated at the FitzPatrick Nuclear Plant when decreasing lake intake water level indication was noted. All rods inserted and all systems functioned as required. There were no engineered safety features actuations. While the lake intake water level dropped from 246' to 239', adequate water flow was available to support the multiple safety-related pumps and the fire water pumps which take suction from this intake. NYPA procedures require declaration of an unusual event when intake level drops below 237' due to the pending loss of water to these pumps.

The initial indication of the cause of the decrease lake intake level indication was ice fouling on the three circulating water screen intakes since weather conditions at the time were indicative of possible frazile ice formation, a condition which occurred several times in the past at FitzPatrick. Prior to the manual scram, operators had reduced plant power to 57% to help reduce the rate of ice/debris accumulation on the screens. Subsequent inspection and cleaning of the circulating water screens determined the cause of the fouling to be a large accumulation of 1 1/2" long stickleback fish.

At the time of this event, two of the three circulating water screens had their drive motors tagged off for the conduct of a preventive maintenance activity. When NYPA initially attempted to clear these two screens just prior to the scram, the high loading caused shear pins on the traveling screens to break; the lone operating screen also tripped prior to the manual scram. NYPA is currently planning a three to four day forced outage to repair the traveling screens, perform a post-trip review and complete other minor maintenance tasks.

The resident inspectors have been following NYPA's review of this event. NYPA issued a press release regarding this event. Region I Public Affairs is prepared to respond to media inquiries. The State of New York has been notified.

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