Editor's Note

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The Antarctic is commonly recognized as one of the most remote and pristine environments on the planet and well removed from the effects of anthropogenic contamination and industrial pollution. However, a study published in the current issue of *Bulletin of Environmental Contamination and Toxicology* (Wintle et al. 2015) demonstrates that aquatic biota from this habitat are susceptible to exposure to pollutants such as mercury (Hg). Nathan Wintle from PDX Wildlife in collaboration with colleagues from the University of Northern Alabama, Pacific University and Portland State University collected dorsal muscle tissues from multiple species of Notothenioid fishes inhabiting Ross Sound, Antarctica in order to assess for the presence of Hg in these fishes. Average Hg concentrations in fish muscle ranged from 22 to 71 ng/g (wet weight) with Hg concentrations quantified in >80 % of fish sampled. Notothenioids are notoriously deep-dwelling fish species

inhabiting depths up to 1500 m in cold polar waters. That these geographically remote and profundal species can bioaccumulate Hg well above detection limits emphasizes the ubiquity of mercury as a global, and likely anthropogenic, contaminant. Given the pristine nature of the Antarctic environment and potential ecological sensitivity of food webs in this region, this research emphasizes the need for further research on Hg as global contaminant, especially in such remote ecosystems.

Reference

- Wintle NJP, Sleadd IM, Gundersen DT, Kohl K, Buckley BA (2015) Total mercury in six Antarctic notothenioid fishes. *Bull Environ Contam Toxicol*. doi:[10.1007/s00128-015-1594-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00128-015-1594-5)

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