

Researchers find consistent mercury levels in arctic seals

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A study published in *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry* spanning 45 years of testing indicates that mercury concentrations in ringed seals from the Canadian Arctic have remained stable, showing very limited declines over time. Credit: Magali Houde

Ringed seals and other Arctic marine mammals are important in the diet of Arctic Indigenous peoples. A study spanning 45 years of testing indicates that mercury concentrations in ringed seals from the Canadian Arctic have remained stable, showing very limited declines over time.

The authors of the *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry* study noted that different climate parameters may have affected mercury accumulation in seals.

"Ringed seal is an important species for contaminants surveillance and monitoring across the Arctic. With the collaboration and support of Inuit communities, we've been able to study contaminants in seals for decades in Canada," said corresponding author Magali Houde, Ph.D., of Environment and Climate Change Canada. "Levels of mercury have not changed much in ringed seals through time. Our result suggests that climate factors could be influencing the accumulation of mercury in [seals](#)."

October 12th is Indigenous Peoples' Day in the United States.

More information: Magali Houde et al, Mercury in Ringed Seals (*Pusa hispida*) from the Canadian Arctic in Relation to Time and Climate Parameters, *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry* (2020). [DOI: 10.1002/etc.4865](https://doi.org/10.1002/etc.4865)

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