

Lots of PCBs in beached porpoises

Half of the porpoise calves washed ashore on the Dutch coast have too high a concentration of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). This is shown by research that Wageningen Marine Research contributed to, for the period 2006–2019. PCBs are transferred from the mother to the calf via the placenta and mother's milk. When the calf is older, it gets PCBs from the fish it eats. Nearly 40 per cent

of the animals studied had concentrations above the healthy limit. In adult males the percentage was 90 per cent, compared with only 10 per cent for females because they secrete PCBs in their milk. The researchers did not find a clear-cut relationship with the cause of death. The study was published in November in *Science of the Total Environment*.
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