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# The New York Times

## For **Killer Whales**, Computer Models Track **PCB** Levels

[Henry Fountain, New York Times](#). (Late Edition (East Coast)). New York, N.Y.: [Sep 11, 2007](#). pg. F.3**Abstract (Summary)**

That was the problem facing Brendan E. Hickie of Trent University in Ontario and colleagues who were trying to evaluate the **PCB** exposure of **killer whales** in the northeastern Pacific. The region's **whales** are endangered for several reasons, including a salmon diet that leads to intensive bioaccumulation of PCBs.

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When determining the long-term effects on an animal of polychlorinated biphenyls, some species are easy to evaluate. They may be small, easy to capture, and have relatively short life spans. But what's a scientist to do when the species is huge, hard to track and lives up to 90 years?

That was the problem facing Brendan E. Hickie of Trent University in Ontario and colleagues who were trying to evaluate the **PCB** exposure of **killer whales** in the northeastern Pacific. The region's **whales** are endangered for several reasons, including a salmon diet that leads to intensive bioaccumulation of PCBs.

The researchers created computer models using PCB data from salmon and ocean sediments to help determine the exposure to PCBs from 1930 to well into the 21st century.

Their findings, reported in *Environmental Science and Technology*, show that even though PCB concentrations in the environment declined beginning in the 1970s, the compound still represents a significant health risk for the whales and will do so for the next 30 to 60 years.

**[Illustration]**

PHOTO

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