

Stranded false killer whales, *Pseudorca crassidens*, in Southern South America reveal potentially dangerous silver concentrations

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Silver (Ag) is a non-essential metal known to bioaccumulate in aquatic organisms. We determined Ag concentrations in five false killer whales stranded in South America. Silver concentrations (in dry weight basis) range as 6.62–10.78 $\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$ in liver, 0.008–7.41 $\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$ in spleen, 0.004–5.71 $\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$ in testis, 0.757–1.69 $\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$ in kidney, 0.011–0.078 $\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$ in lung and < 0.01 –0.038 $\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$ in muscle, whereas in the single samples of uterus and ovary were 0.051 and 0.023 $\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$; respectively. Overall, Ag concentration in liver and kidney exceeded the cetacean toxic thresholds, proposed as ‘unhealthy concentrations’ and ‘critically dangerous’ in liver and kidney. These results warrant further eco-toxicological studies, to examine biological effects of elevated silver levels for individuals and to assess the species' conservation status with respect to marine pollution.