

Transport and release of chemicals from plastics to the environment and to wildlife

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Abstract: Plastics debris in the marine environment, including resin pellets, fragments and microscopic plastic fragments, contain organic contaminants, including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, petroleum hydrocarbons, organochlorine pesticides (2,2'-bis(p-chlorophenyl)-1,1,1-trichloroethane, hexachlorinated hexanes), polybrominated diphenylethers, alkylphenols and bisphenol A, at concentrations from sub ng g⁻¹ to ?g g⁻¹. Some of these compounds are added during plastics manufacture, while others adsorb from the surrounding seawater. Concentrations of hydrophobic contaminants adsorbed on plastics showed distinct spatial variations reflecting global pollution patterns. Model calculations and experimental observations consistently show that polyethylene accumulates more organic contaminants than other plastics such as polypropylene and polyvinyl chloride. Both a mathematical model using equilibrium partitioning and experimental data have demonstrated the transfer of contaminants from plastic to organisms. A feeding experiment indicated that PCBs could transfer from contaminated plastics to streaked shearwater chicks. Plasticizers, other plastics additives and constitutional monomers also

present potential threats in terrestrial environments because they can leach from waste disposal sites into groundwater and/or surface waters. Leaching and degradation of plasticizers and polymers are complex phenomena dependent on environmental conditions in the landfill and the chemical properties of each additive. Bisphenol A concentrations in leachates from municipal waste disposal sites in tropical Asia ranged from sub $\mu\text{g l}^{-1}$ to $\mu\text{g l}^{-1}$ and were correlated with the level of economic development. ?? 2009 The Royal Society.

Author Keywords: Endocrine-disrupting chemicals; Landfill leachate; Marine plastic debris; Microplastics; Persistent organic pollutants; Plastic resin pellet

Index Keywords: 4,4' isopropylidenediphenol; diphenyl ether derivative; endocrine disruptor; pesticide; petroleum; phenol derivative; plastic; polychlorinated biphenyl; polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon; sea water; concentration (composition); endocrine disruptor; environmental conditions; landfill; leaching; marine pollution; numerical model; organic pollutant; PAH; PCB; plastic waste; resin; spatial variation; waste disposal; waste facility; wildlife management; adsorption; animal; article; bird; chemistry; feeding behavior; food chain; kinetics; metabolism; physiology; pollutant; pollution; Polychaeta; theoretical model; Adsorption; Animals; Birds; Endocrine Disruptors; Environmental Pollutants; Feeding Behavior; Food Chain; Halogenated Diphenyl Ethers; Kinetics; Models, Theoretical; Pesticides; Petroleum; Phenols; Plastics; Polychaeta; Polychlorinated Biphenyls; Polycyclic Hydrocarbons, Aromatic; Seawater; Waste Products

Year: 2009

Source title: Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences

Volume: 364

Issue: 1526

Page : 2027-2045

Cited by: 18

Link: Scopus Link

Chemicals/CAS: 4,4' isopropylidenediphenol, 80-05-7; petroleum, 8002-05-9; Endocrine Disruptors; Environmental Pollutants; Halogenated Diphenyl Ethers; Pesticides; Petroleum; Phenols; Plastics; Polychlorinated Biphenyls; Polycyclic Hydrocarbons, Aromatic; Waste Products; bisphenol A, 80-05-7

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ISSN: 9628436

CODEN: PTRBA

DOI: 10.1098/rstb.2008.0284

PubMed ID: 19528054

Language of Original Document: English

Abbreviated Source Title: Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences

Document Type: Article

Source: Scopus

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