

Project Update: October 2018

We used mercury as ecological tracer to confirm coastal habits for bottlenose dolphins in the Archipelago of Bocas del Toro. For this, we compared mercury and isotopic data from dolphins in the archipelago and neighbouring coastal areas. Previously, we had reported low mercury concentrations in skin samples from dolphins in Bocas del Toro; now with more samples, we confirm low values in relation to dolphins from the other areas. Recent studies suggest that mercury concentrations tend to increase with increasing median depth of occurrence, so pelagic preys can reflect higher Hg concentrations than not polluted coastal areas. Following this, dolphins in other coastal areas outside Bocas del Toro appear to feed on a narrow set of prey items of pelagic habits, resulting in higher concentrations of mercury than coastal bottlenose dolphins in the Archipelago. These findings provide ecotoxicological evidence to confirm coastal habits of bottlenose dolphins in Bocas del Toro.



Bottlenose dolphin jumping.
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Taking photos of dolphins.
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Bottlenose dolphin surfing.
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