

# Pollutant

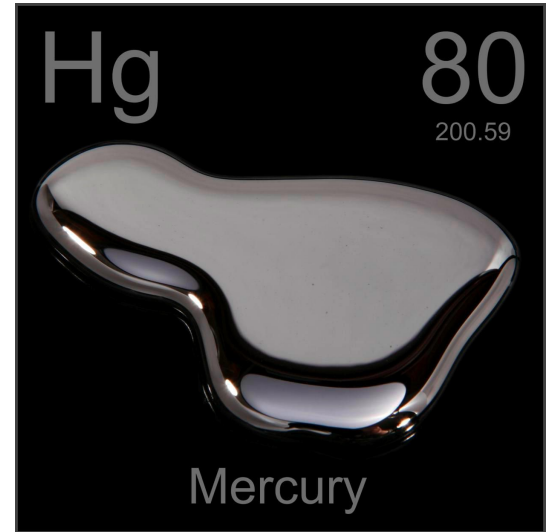
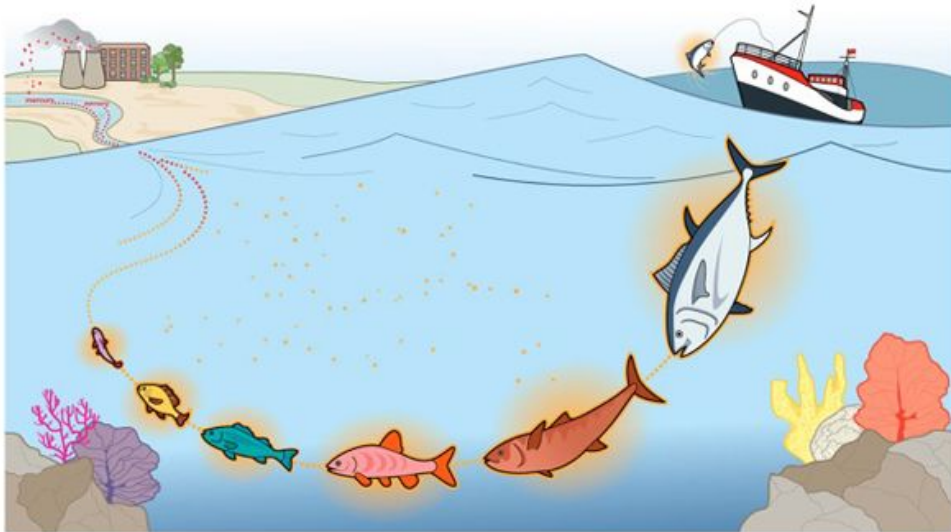
- A substance introduced to the environment that has negative effects
- Some pollutants are natural and biodegradable, so they cause short-term problems
- Some are man-made and do not break down, but continue to accumulate and cause bigger and bigger problems



# Example #1: Mercury

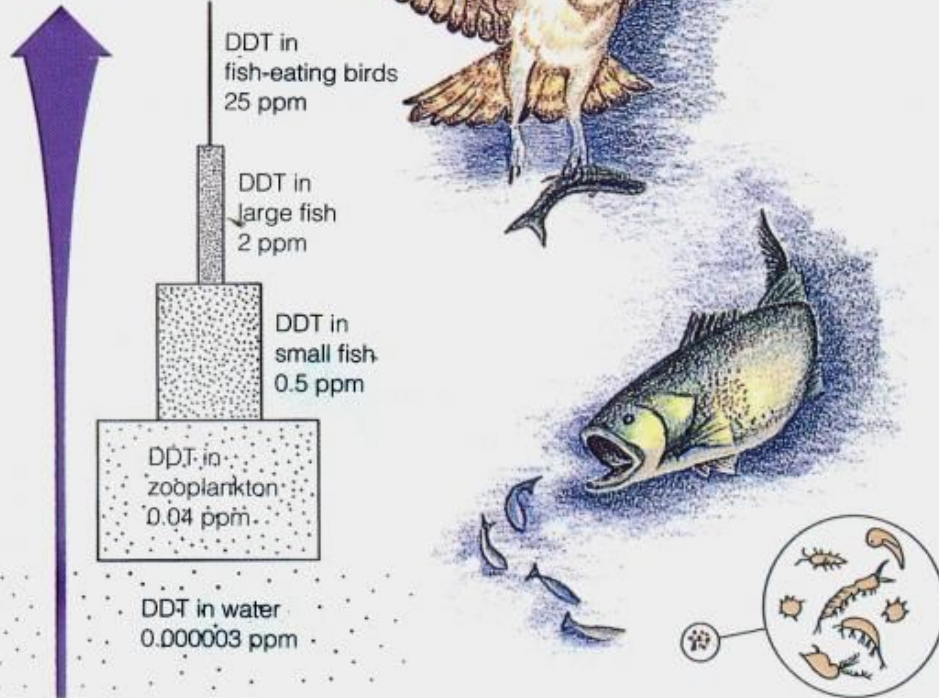
Mercury is a *naturally occurring element* that is toxic in large quantities.

Extra mercury has been added to the environment by humans burning coal and mining metals. That mercury makes its way to the ocean, where it gets absorbed by plankton who can't get rid of it.



# BIOMAGNIFICATION

DDT concentration:  
increase of  
10 million times



## Example #2: DDT

\* \*organisms are not able to break down or get rid of some toxins, so they build up in the body throughout the organism's lifetime

\*\***Biomagnification** is the increasing concentration of a substance in the tissues of organisms at successively higher levels in a food chain

Extra nutrients (N, P) from over-fertilized fields “run-off” into streams, ponds, rivers, and eventually into the ocean.

## Example #3: Eutrophication

This causes an “algal bloom”, where algae and other small producers grow rapidly!

The algae can be toxic, but even if not, it blocks light and depletes dissolved oxygen, killing other organisms.

