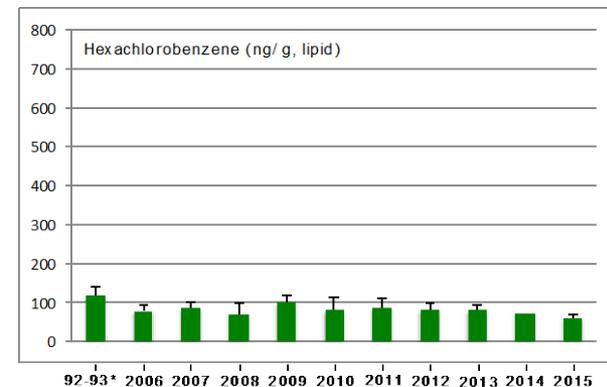
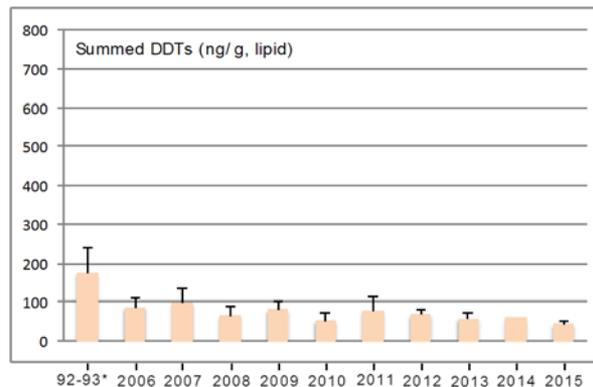
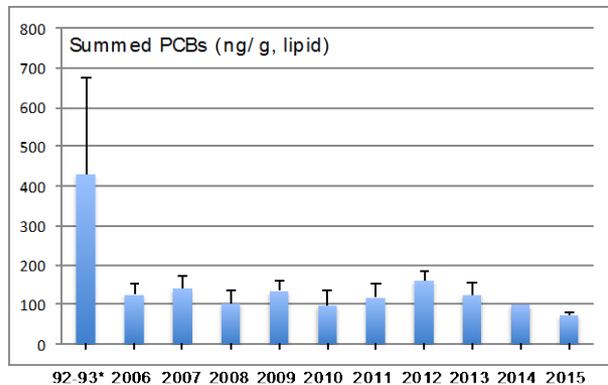




# Contaminant Trends: Then and Now 1992 to 2015



Since 1992, the NSB-DWM has been monitoring levels of contaminants, such as PCBs, DDT, and hexachlorobenzene, in subsistence foods. PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, were used in electrical equipment until being banned in 1977. DDT, dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane, was a pesticide banned in 1972, and hexachlorobenzene is a fungicide that was banned in 1966. These toxic chemicals have been introduced to the Arctic marine environment from industrial and agricultural activity in other parts of the world, and although may no longer be used, they are very persistent. These chemicals accumulate in the fatty tissue of living organisms, including blubber or *maktak*. The test results below for bowhead whale fatty tissue samples collected between 1992 and 2015 show a marked decrease in PCB, as well as decreases in DDT and hexachlorobenzene. The NSB-DWM continues to monitor subsistence species for contaminants for food safety concerns.



## GOOD NEWS:

- **PCB (ng/g lipid) is 4-5 times lower in 2015**
- **DDT (ng/g lipid) is 3 times lower in 2015**
- **Hexachlorobenzene (ng/g lipid) 2 times lower in 2015**
- Sum of PCB and DDT in *Maktak* is at least **10 times lower** and in **Meat** is at least **100 times lower** than the US FDA tolerance levels for DDT (5000 ng/g wet weight) and PCB (2000 ng/g wet weight).

