

Bioaccumulation of metals in silver carp and stone moroko from Zarivar Wetland in Kurdistan Province, Iran

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Original Article

Abstract

This research aims to monitor the trace elements content (Cr, Cu, Pb, Cd, Ag, Al, Mn, Mg, Zn and Fe) in the tissues of the muscle and liver of silver carp (*H. molitrix*) and stone moroko (*P. parva*) from Zarivar Wetland in western Iran. This research was cross-sectional. The research specimen was fish caught from Zarivar Wetland. Metal concentration analysis was carried out utilizing an ICP. Findings indicate presence of Fe and Pb in the liver, Zn and Cd in the muscle had the highest and lowest metal concentration accumulated, respectively. The trace elements content in the liver tissue was higher than those in the muscle tissue of *H. molitrix* and *P. parva*. Moreover, the Hazard Quotients for an adult with mean of 71.5 kg was below 1 based on trace elements levels. Though, the mean concentrations of trace elements in the muscle of *H. molitrix* and *P. parva* was lower than international standards. according to the uptake and distribution, these elements require periodic monitoring in the human body.

KEYWORDS: Liver, Muscles, Carps, Trace Elements, Lead.

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Introduction

The contamination of aquatic environments by trace elements has raised major concerns in local, regional, and global scales due to their persistence in the ecosystem acute and chronic toxicity, non-biodegradable nature, and ability to be accumulated and transferred into aquatic food web.^{1,2} Metals fall into one of the two important groups; essential and nonessential groups. Some of the trace elements such as Zn, Cu, and Fe are essential elements or micronutrients to living organisms and have important roles in biological functions, but can be toxic at higher concentrations; whereas other trace elements like Ag, Pb, and Cd even at low level are nonessential elements for

physiological and biochemical processes in organisms and can result in severe health effects.³ The finding of Eisler⁴ indicates that the Cd is a known teratogen and carcinogen, and has been reported as the cause of several deleterious effects on fish and wildlife. Pb accumulation in aquatic environment occurs mainly through the gills of fish and uptake of Pb that causes several adverse effects like blood chemistry, reduced survival, impaired reproduction and heme synthesis, reduced growth, and high bioconcentration for aquatic biota.^{4,5} Thus, it is expedient to monitor freshwater ecosystems polluted by trace elements and disseminate information on the content of trace elements in the tissues of fish for ecosystem monitoring and human consumption. In recent years in diverse areas of Iran, several studies have reported contents of trace elements in the aquatic environment in

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different species of fish in Qanats of Birjand,⁶ Zabol Chahnimeh Reservoirs,⁷ Sanandaj Gheshlagh Reservoir,⁸ Qeshm Island,⁹ Zarivar Wetland,¹ and Anzali Wetland.¹⁰ Fish is a rich source of omega-3, polyunsaturated fatty acids for human health and contribute to immune system health, cardiovascular disease, brain, and inflammatory conditions.^{11,12} Fish samples have been utilized as excellent indicators for the estimation of the levels of trace element contamination in aquatic environments and may receive large amounts of some trace elements from surrounding waters, because they occupy higher trophic levels of food web and are responsible for the adverse effects in the aquatic system.^{13,14} Fishes in aquatic ecosystems in Zarivar Wetland near Marivan City in Kurdistan Province are often subjected to contamination with trace elements because the runoff from villages and farmlands enters the wetland and sometimes these discharges are deliberate. Therefore, the aim of the present study was to assess the distribution of selected trace elements concentrations of Ag, Mn, Cr, Fe, Pb, Zn, Cu, Cd, Mg, and Al in the liver and muscle of silver carp (*H. molitrix*) and stone moroko (*P. parva*) in Zarivar wetland, Iran, and to identify the potential public health risk from these trace elements related to the consumption safety of the muscle of fishes.

Materials and Methods

Zarivar Wetland is located in western Iran (Fig. 1) with an average area and water depth of 720 ha and 4-5 m respectively, it is a main source of water supply for Marivan City and other agricultural areas. In terms of contamination, the quality of Zarivar Wetland water is influenced by the waste water discharged from adjacent populated areas, mainly Marivan City. Furthermore, in recent years, Zarivar Wetland has become one of the important tourist resorts in western Iran and that releases substantial amount of contamination into wetland waters.

Specimens were gathered from random catches in Zarivar wetland from August to December, 2015. The specimens were transported to the laboratory in ice chambers. The collections included *Hypophthalmichthys molitrix* and *Pseudorasbora parva*. Thereafter, fish tissue samples were dissected while

wearing clean plastic gloves and prepared for chemical digestion. Fish muscle tissue was extracted from below the dorsal fin without skin.¹⁰

For each digestion procedure, one gram of liver and muscle was weighed out for analysis, transferred into 150-mL Erlenmeyer flasks, and mineralized with mixture of nitric acid (10 ml) and perchloric acid (5 ml). The samples were digested on a bain-marie (water bath) at 100 °C until the solutions were clear and digestion solution was diluted to 25 ml with deionized water. Thereafter, sample solutions were stored in polyethylene bottles at room temperature until the assessment of trace elements concentrations by ICP-OES. The limits of detection were as follows: Cd (0.01), Pb (0.2), Cr (0.2), Cu (0.3), Ag (0.2), Al (0.1), Mn (0.2), Mg (0.3), Fe (0.2), and Zn (0.75) $\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$. Results for Zn, Pb, Cd and Cu gave a mean recovery of 96 to 99%.

The data were analyzed statistically using SPSS statistical package (version 16; SPSS, Chicago, IL). ANOVA test (one-way) was used for finding the difference among the concentrations of heavy metals in fish tissues. Moreover, Pearson correlation test was employed for the analysis of correlations among trace elements, size and weight of the fish. The concentration of metals in tissues of fish was expressed as $\mu\text{g/g}$ (ww). In addition, data were presented in mean (\pm standard deviation) and level of statistical significance was designated as $p < 0.05$.

As reported by Ariayee et al., daily consumption limits were calculated⁷:

$$CR_{lim} = \frac{RfD \times BW}{C_m}$$

CR_{lim} is maximum allowable fish consumption rate (kg/d); RfD is reference dose (1 for Cd, none set for Pb, 5 for Cr, 30 for Zn, 40 for Cu, 140 for Mn, 5 for Ag, and 360 for Al $\mu\text{g/kg/day}$); BW is body weight (kg) of consumer; and C_m is contents of trace elements m in fish species (mg/kg). A 0.227 kg average fish meal size was assumed.⁶

CR_{mm} is the maximum allowable fish consumption rate (meals per month); CR_{lim} is the maximum allowable fish consumption rate (kg/d); MS is the average fish meal size (0.227

$$CR_{mm} = \frac{CR_{lim} \times T_{ap}}{MS}$$

kg fish/meal); and Tap is the time averaging period (365.25 days/12 months=30.44 days/month).

Hazard Quotients:

$$HQ = (\{MTC \times CR\} / BW) / RfD$$

Where HQ is assessment of health risks of fish consumption by people; RfD is reference dose (1 for Cd, none set for Pb, 5 for Cr, 30 for Zn, 40 for Cu, 140 for Mn, 5 for Ag, and 360 for Al $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}/\text{day}$); BW is body weight (kg) of consumer; and MTC is the content of trace elements *m* in a given species of fish (mg/kg), CR is the average fish meal size (0.003 kg fish/meal). A HQ less 1 means the population is not exposed with serious health risks.⁷

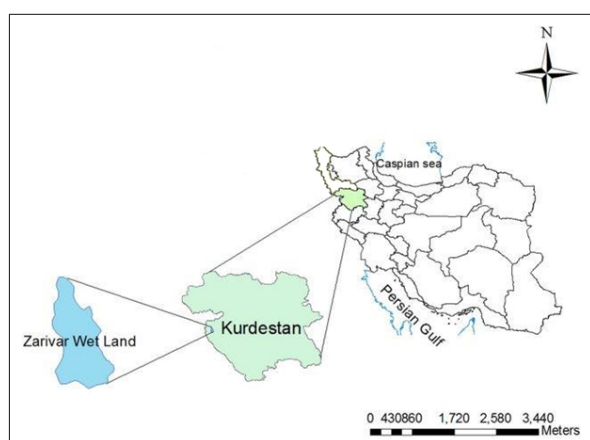


Figure 1. The map of Zarivar wetland in western Iran

Results and Discussion

Trace elements contents in the liver and muscle of *H. molitrix* and *P. parva* are presented in Tables 1 and 2. The element accumulation in liver had the following trend: Al > Fe > Zn > Cu > Mg > Mn > Cd > Ag > Pb > Cr in *H. molitrix*; and Fe > Al > Zn > Mn > Mg > Cu > Fe > Cr > Ag > Pb > Cd in *P. parva*; Furthermore, the tendency of accumulation of elements in the muscle was: Al > Zn > Mg > Mn > Cu > Fe > Cr > Ag > Pb > Cd in *P. parva*; and Al > Zn > Mg > Cu > Mn > Fe > Cr > Ag > Pb > Cd in *H. molitrix*. Findings of our

research showed that element contents in liver were higher than muscle. In addition, results of statistical studies illustrated that trace element levels (except Cr and Pb) in liver tissue of *H. molitrix* and *P. parva* were significant ($p < 0.05$; Table 1); while, only Fe, Al, Mg, and Mn levels in muscle tissue were significant ($p < 0.05$; Table 2). Correlation of elements in muscle tissue of fish caught in Zarivar Wetland are shown in Table 3. The results of HQ in *H. molitrix* and *P. parva* were below 1 (Table 4). Moreover, based on our findings, the maximum allowable fish consumption rate for an adult person with mean body weight of 71.5 kg was 18-37, 31-40, and 28-150 g/day according to Cr, Cd, and Pb concentrations, respectively.

According to our results, the content of trace elements in liver of *H. molitrix* were higher than those of the muscle and contents of Zn, Fe, and Cu were higher than Pb and Cd in tissues of *P. parva* and *H. molitrix*. As the low contents of trace elements in the muscle of two fish species are due to the fact that the muscle tissue in comparison to liver involves lower metabolic activities to the elements accumulation and proved to be a good source of vital elements at small levels.¹⁵ Furthermore, in this study, results of statistical analysis show that the metal contents in the liver tissues of *H. molitrix* were significant; while, only some metal levels in muscle tissue were significant. Because of the health aspects of fish consumption by humans, toxic chemical accumulation from aquatic systems by muscle tissue is more important than those of the liver. Majnoni et al.¹, Ariyae et al.⁷ and Ahmed et al.¹⁵ illustrated that the element levels in the muscle tissue were lower than those of other tissues such as liver. The literature shows that in many cases, the liver also plays a vital role in trace elements transformation or detoxification, redistribution, and active site of

Table 1. Trace elements concentration (Mean and SD) in the liver of two fish in Zarivar wetland

	No.	Fe	Zn	Ag	Cu	Al	Cr	Mn	Cd	Mg	Pb
<i>H. molitrix</i>	24										
Mean		10.1	6.7	1.3	3.96	10.88	1.1	2.41	2.1	3.1	1.17
SD		1.2	1.8	0.4	0.8	2.5	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.7
<i>P. parva</i>	16										
Mean		23.57	13.34	2.45	4.37	14.0	1.8	5.9	2.53	5.21	1.64
SD		5.5	1.1	0.6	0.7	4.0	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.9	0.4
P value		<0.05	<0.05	<0.05	<0.05	<0.05	NS	<0.05	<0.05	<0.05	NS

NS – not significant

Table 2. Trace elements (Mean and SD) in the muscle of two fish in Zarivar wetland

	No.	Fe	Zn	Ag	Cu	Al	Cr	Mn	Cd	Mg	Pb
H. molitrix	24										
Mean		0.89	2.56	0.53	1.51	5.11	0.71	1.35	0.21	1.52	0.24
SD		0.3	0.4	0.1	0.3	1.1	0.1	0.6	0.1	0.4	0.1
P. parva	16										
Mean		1.39	3.15	0.66	2.19	9.11	0.79	2.71	0.22	2.62	0.38
SD		0.5	0.3	0.2	0.5	2.52	0.1	0.6	0.1	0.9	0.1
P value		<0.05	NS	NS	NS	<0.05	NS	<0.05	NS	<0.05	NS

NS – not significant

pathological effects induced by pollutants.^{10,7,16} Producing metallothionein is a reaction of fish to trace elements exposure, particularly in liver.¹⁷ Hence, the liver tissues in fish when pollution. According to correlation compared to any other fish tissues are more often suggested as bioindicators of water coefficients of trace elements in muscles of two fish species, most of them were highly correlated and this shows that the metals with high positive correlations are possibly from the same pollution source and vice versa.

Table 3. Correlation coefficients of trace elements contents in the muscle tissue of two fish species caught in Zarivar Wetland

Species	Metals	PC*	Sig.**
H. molitrix	Pb=Mn	0.84	0.01
	Cd=Zn	0.84	0.01
	Mn=Cr	0.76	0.04
P. parva	Pb=Mg	-0.72	0.04
	Mg=Mn	0.97	0.01
	Cd=Fe	0.71	0.04

*Pearson Correlation coefficients;

**significant: 0.05 and 0.01 levels

Among the trace elements in this study, it is understood that the toxicity of Cd and Pb is very important, because both metals are non-essential metals and toxic¹. Chronic exposure to Cd and Pb cause some problems in the body such as circulatory system, kidney and liver failure and nerve tissue deficiency. Hanaa et al.¹⁸ demonstrated that high levels of Pb lead to some damage in the body such as death or the central nervous system, brain, and kidney deterioration. Pb levels in the muscle tissues of *H. molitrix* and *P. parva* (0.24 to 0.38 µg/g) were lower than the maximum acceptable content (2.0 µg/g) published by UK Food Standards Agency,¹⁹ Spanish legislation,²⁰ EC,²¹ and Australian National Health and Medical Research Council.²² The contents of

Cd obtained from *H. molitrix* and *P. parva* (0.21 to 0.22 µg/g) muscle tissues were lower than the maximum acceptable content set by Spanish legislation (1.0 µg/g)²⁰, ANHMRC (2.0 µg/g), and Western Australian authorities (5.5 µg/g).²³

The mean Al values in fish varied from 14 to 23 µg/g in liver and 5 to 9 µg/g in muscle. The Al values are similar to the values of *Merlangius merlangus*, *Sadra sarda*, *Engraulis encrasicolus*, and *Pamatomus saltarix* (7 to 9 µg/g) in West Black Sea, Sakarya,²⁴ and higher than *Cyprinus carpio* (5 to 11 µg/g in liver and 2 to 4 µg/g in muscle) in Pansky and Klucenicky Ponds, Czech Republic.²⁵ The mean contents of Cr (0.71 to 0.79 µg/g) in fish in present research were lower than the 5.5 µg/g limit of Cr set by the Western Australian Food and Drug regulations.²³ In a similar study by Rahman et al.,²¹ maximum value of Mn in *Corica soborna*, was shown as 51.2 µg/g, but our maximum value from this study (1.35 to 5.9 µg/g) was far below their result. Mn as manganese-activated enzymes plays beneficial roles for humans including digestion, a cellular antioxidant, regulation of reproduction, blood sugar, and bone growth²⁴ and chromium as an essential mineral, is involved in insulin action and it has effects on the metabolism of carbohydrate, protein and lipid. For daily intake of Fe, FAO²⁶ suggests a value of 48 µg/g is safe for human consumption on the basis of body weight. Our findings of Fe in liver in this study (10-23 µg/g) were lower than Fe levels reported by Mendil et al.²⁷ in different fish species (ranged between 25.5 and 41.4 µg/g) and Waheed et al.²⁸ in the muscle and liver tissues of herbivorous (HF) and carnivorous (CF) edible fish (42 and 45 µg/g in liver and muscle of HF; and 95 and 33 µg/g in liver and muscle of CF).

According to the proposed ANHMRC and

Table 4. HQ and CR indexes for two fish species in Zarivar Wetland

Species		HQ	CR (g)
H. molitrix	Zn	0.0040	100.57
	Cu	0.0015	255.42
	Cr	0.0061	39.11
	Cd	0.0115	34.76
	Pb	0.0107	37.54
	Ag	0.0034	117.33
	Mn	0.0004	912.60
	Al	0.0005	715.94
P. parva	Zn	0.0046	86.11
	Cu	0.0025	157.10
	Cr	0.0072	150.59
	Cd	0.0098	40.81
	Pb	0.0145	27.60
	Ag	0.0061	14.79
	Mn	0.0009	423.91
	Al	0.0009	411.10

FAO guidelines, a maximum permissible concentration of Cu is 30 µg/g fresh weight²⁹ and the UK food Standard Agency has recommended Cu of up to 20 per ww¹⁹ (in this study, it was 2.10 µg/g for *H. molitrix*). The Cu contents in muscle of two fish species in this research were similar to those of other areas reported in Iskenderun Bay in Turkey,³⁰ Zabol Chahnimeh Reservoirs in Iran,⁷ and Yangtze River in China.³¹ The Zn and Cu contents in the muscle tissue of fish in Zarivar Wetland were below the specified content of concern for human health as defined by the FAO.²⁶ The Cu and Zn contents in the muscle and liver of *H. molitrix* from this research were lower than those in *C. idellus*, and *P. fluviatilis* from Anzali wetland from Iran,¹⁰ and *C. carpio* and *H. molitrix* from Sanandaj Gheshlagh Reservoir from Iran.³² The levels of Ag in the muscle of *H. molitrix* was higher than the findings of Ahmad et al.¹⁵ in four native fish species collected from river Kabul in Pakistan.

To estimate the potential health risks from consuming metal-contaminated fish as well as to humans who consume them, the HQ and CR of trace elements were calculated according to consumption of fish captured in Zarivar Wetland. The estimated HQ for trace elements indicated that the Pb and Cd's HQ were the highest values and Mn and Mg were the lowest values in two fish species. In this study, HQ values of Pb (0.010 to 0.214) and Cd (0.009 to 0.012) for *H. molitrix* were higher than comparable values for Pb (0.033) and Cd (0.031) from the consumption of fish by the

general population in the Taihu lake, China.³³ Yu et al.³³ quantified mean THQ values of 0.29–0.45 for Pb for common carp by local residents at Fandong village from Dabaoshan mine, South China, and, similarly, Yi et al.³¹ obtained mean THQ values of 0.29, 0.34, 0.11, and 0.16 for Cd, Pb, Cu, and Zn, respectively in the Yangtze River. Both were considerably greater than HQ values in fish from Zarivar wetland. The daily intake of trace elements from fish depends on some elements like trace elements contents in food source and level of food consumed.³⁴ According to our result, all the HQ contents were lower than 1 for two fish species in Zarivar Wetland that implies the consumers of fish will not be exposed to health risks.¹⁴

Conclusion

Metal concentration in the liver was higher than the muscle and the maximum allowable fish consumption rate for an adult person with mean body weight of 71.5 kg was 31-40, 18-37, and 28-150 g/day based on Cr, Pb, and Cd levels, respectively. According to our findings, the trace elements contents in fish muscle of Zarivar wetland were less of concern for human consumption. Although our research shows that element concentrations in edible muscle of two fish species were lower than international standards, but according to the bioaccumulation and toxicity of these metals in the body, periodic monitoring is essential.

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