

**QUANTIFICATION OF HEAVY METALS IN BIVALVES ALONG NORTHWEST COAST OF  
SABAH**

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**PERPUSTAKAAN  
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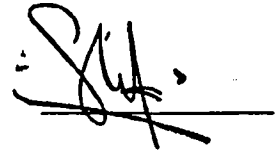
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## ABSTRACT

Level of heavy metals in marine environment has been intensively studied in recent years as these hazardous substances are very harmful to the organisms and the environment. Generally, heavy metals contaminants in marine environment resulted from anthropogenic discharges that contain harmful substances which flow into the marine ecosystem. In this study, the marine bivalve marsh clams (*Polymesoda expansa*) and green mussels (*Perna viridis*) were collected along the Northwest coast of Sabah particularly in Kota Marudu (Marudu Bay), Kota Belud (Ambong Bay), Tuaran (Salut and Mengkabong rivers) and Sepanggar (Sepanggar Bay) and analyzed for heavy metal elements (As, Cr, Cu, Mn, Ni, Pb and Zn). The study was carried out to measure the concentration of heavy metals in different districts along the coast of Sabah and to compare the concentration of heavy metals in the two bivalves. Bivalves are widely used in many countries as bio-indicator to bio-monitor the contaminants in the marine environment as it can accumulate pollutant such as heavy metals. Bivalves are also very sensitive to contaminants and show good responses to environmental changes. From this study, the highest mean concentration of heavy metals recorded was Zn in marsh clams and green mussels from Tuaran and Sepanggar at 535.849 ( $\mu\text{g/g}$ ) and 374.366 ( $\mu\text{g/g}$ ), respectively which was exceeded the permissible limit set by Malaysian Regulation (1985) and FAO/WHO (1984) but below the limit set by other countries such as Thailand and Australia. However, when compare with Tolerable upper intake level (TUI) set by Food and Nutrition Board (2001) Zn concentration in marsh clams and green mussels from Tuaran and Sepanggar are safe for human consumption with little precaution. The statistical analysis of Pearson's correlation showed that, the bivalves with longer length and heavier in weight have the tendency to accumulate higher amount of heavy metals.

## ABSTRAK

Tahap logam berat di persekitaran marin telah menjadi salah satu focus penyelidikan penting kebelakangan ini. Ini kerana, logam berat amatlah berbahaya kepada organisma dan alam sekitar. Secara umumnya, logam berat dalam persekitaran marin berpunca daripada aktiviti antropogenik yang mengandungi bahan-bahan berbahaya yang mengalir ke dalam ekosistem marin. Dalam kajian ini, lokan (*Polymesoda expansa*) dan kupang (*Perna viridis*) telah diambil dari kawasan kajian sepanjang pantai barat laut Sabah khususnya dari Kota Marudu (Teluk Marudu), Kota Belud (Teluk Ambong), Tuaran (sungai Salut dan Mengkabong) dan Sepanggar (Teluk Sepanggar) bagi menganalisis unsur-unsur logam berat seperti (As, Cr, Cu, Mn, Ni, Pb dan Zn). Kajian ini dilakukan bagi mengukur kepekatan logam berat di daerah yang berlainan di sepanjang pantai barat Sabah dan membandingkan kepekatan logam berat dalam dua jenis spesies dwi-cengkerang. Haiwan dwi-cengkerang digunakan secara meluas di beberapa buah negara sebagai bio-petunjuk untuk bio-memantau bahan-bahan cemar di dalam persekitaran marin kerana ia boleh mengumpul pencemar marin seperti logam berat. Haiwan dwi-cengkerang ini juga sangat sensitif kepada bahan cemar dan menunjukkan respon positif terhadap perubahan persekitaran. Daripada kajian ini, logam berat, Zn dalam lokan dan kupang dari Tuaran dan Sepanggar mempunyai min kepekatan tertinggi iaitu masing-masing 535.849 ( $\mu\text{g} / \text{g}$ ) dan 374.366 ( $\mu\text{g} / \text{g}$ ). Kepekatan logam Zn ini, telah melebihi had yang dibenarkan oleh Penguatkuasaan Malaysia (1985) dan FAO / WHO (1984) tetapi masih di bawah had yang ditetapkan oleh negara-negara lain seperti Thailand dan Australia. Walau bagaimanapun, apabila dibandingkan dengan tahap pengambilan (TUI) yang ditetapkan oleh Lembaga Makanan dan Pemakanan (2001), kepekatan Zn dalam lokan dan kupang dari Tuaran dan Sepanggar adalah selamat untuk dimakan oleh manusia, tetapi perlu mengambil langkah berjaga-jaga. Analisis statistik korelasi Pearson menunjukkan bahawa, semakin panjang dan berat kedua-dua jenis dwi-cengkerang ini, kecenderungan mereka untuk mengakumulasi logam berat adalah tinggi.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Pages
DECLARATION	ii
VERIFICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
ABSTRACT	v
ABSTRAK	vi
LIST OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF APPENDICES	xii
LIST OF FORMULA	xiii
LIST OF SYMBOLS	xiv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xv
 <b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 General background	1
1.2 Problem Statement	3
1.3 Objectives	3
1.4 Hypotheses	3
1.5 Significance of study	4
 <b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	
2.1 Biology of Bivalves	5
2.2 Feeding behavior of Bivalves	6
2.3 Accumulation of heavy metals in Bivalves	6
2.4 Effects of heavy metals to Bivalves and human	8
2.5 Bivalves as bio-indicator of contaminant in the environment	9
2.6 Sources of heavy metals	9





2.7	Determination methods of heavy metals concentration	10
2.8	Mitigation of heavy metals contamination pollution	13

### CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1	Sample Collection	17
3.2	Heavy metals analysis	19
3.2.1	Sampling, storage and sample preparation	19
3.2.2	Tissue drying	19
3.2.3	Tissue digestion	20
3.2.4	Calculation for heavy metal concentrations after ICP-OES analysis	21
3.3	Statistical Analysis	21

### CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

4.1	Morphometric measurements of bivalve samples	22
4.2	Heavy metals concentrations in marsh clams ( <i>Polymesoda expansa</i> ) from Kota Marudu, Kota Belud, Tuaran and Sepanggar	23
4.3	Heavy metals concentrations of green mussel ( <i>Perna viridis</i> ) from Kota Marudu, Kota Belud, Tuaran and Sepanggar.	25
4.4	The comparison of heavy metal concentrations between marsh clam ( <i>Polymesoda expansa</i> ) and green mussel ( <i>Perna viridis</i> ).	31
4.5	Relationship between length and wet weight of samples (marsh clams and green mussels) and concentration of heavy metals.	32

### CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

		33
5.1	Heavy metals concentrations Marsh clam ( <i>Polymesoda expansa</i> ) from Kota Marudu, Kota Belud, Tuaran and Sepanggar.	34
5.2	Heavy metals concentrations in green mussel ( <i>Perna viridis</i> ) from Kota Marudu, Kota Belud, Tuaran and Sepanggar.	36
5.3	Possible sources of heavy metals	38

5.4	The comparison of heavy metal concentrations, between marsh clam ( <i>Polymesoda expansa</i> ) and green mussel ( <i>Perna viridis</i> )	40
5.5	Relationship between length and wet weight of samples (marsh clams and green mussels) and concentration of heavy metals.	42
<b>CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION</b>		<b>43</b>
REFERENCES		44
APPENDICES		59

## LIST OF TABLES

No. of Tables	Pages
2.1 Guidelines on heavy metals ( $\mu\text{g/ g dry weight}$ ) for food safety set by different agencies and countries	14
2.2 Comparison of heavy metal concentrations means ( $\mu\text{g/ g dry weight}$ ) in bivalves with other studies in Malaysia	16
4.1 Length (cm) and wet weight (g) of the bivalve samples analyzed in this study.	21
4.2 Mean concentrations of arsenic (As), chromium (Cr), copper (Cu), manganese (Mn), nickel (Ni) lead (Pb) and zinc (Zn) in marsh clam ( <i>Polymesoda expansa</i> ) collected from Kota Marudu, Kota Belud, Tuaran and Sepanggar.	23
4.3 Mean concentrations of arsenic (As), chromium (Cr), copper (Cu), manganese (Mn), nickel (Ni), lead (Pb) and zinc (Zn) in green mussel ( <i>Perna viridis</i> ) samples collected from Kota Marudu, Kota Belud, Tuaran and Sepanggar.	25
4.4 The mean concentrations of arsenic (As), chromium (Cr), copper (Cu), manganese (Mn), nickel (Ni), lead (Pb) and zinc (Zn) recorded in marsh clam and green mussel in Kota Marudu, Kota Belud, Tuaran and Sepanggar	30
4.5 Pearson's correlation of heavy metal concentrations with length and wet weight of the bivalve samples.	32

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

No. of Figure	Pages
2.1 Atomic Absorption Spectrometry (AAS)	11
2.2 Inductively Coupled Plasma Atomic Emission Spectroscopy (ICP-AES)	11
2.3 Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry (ICP-MS)	12
2.4 Atomic Fluorescence Spectrometry (AFS)	12
3.1 Map shows the sampling locations	17
4.1 As concentrations in marsh clams and green mussels from Marudu Bay (Kota Marudu), Kota Belud, Tuaran and Sepanggar	26
4.2 Cr concentrations in marsh clams and green mussels from Marudu Bay (KotaMarudu), Kota Belud, Tuaran and Sepanggar	26
4.3 Cu concentrations in marsh clams and green mussels from Marudu Bay (Kota Marudu), Kota Belud, Tuaran and Sepanggar	27
4.4 Mn concentrations in marsh clams and green mussels from Marudu Bay (Kota Marudu), Kota Belud, Tuaran and Sepanggar	27
4.5 Ni concentrations in marsh clams and green mussels from Marudu Bay (Kota Marudu), Kota Belud, Tuaran and Sepanggar	28
4.6 Pb concentrations in marsh clams and green mussels from Marudu Bay (Kota Marudu), Kota Belud, Tuaran and Sepanggar	28
4.7 Zn concentrations in marsh clams and green mussels from Marudu Bay (Kota Marudu), Kota Belud, Tuaran and Sepanggar	29

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

<b>No. of Appendix</b>		<b>Pages</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Determination of heavy metals concentration</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Morphometric measurement (Length and wet weight)</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>SPSS Statistical analysis tests</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Images taken during sampling</b>	<b>77</b>

## LIST OF FORMULA

No. of Formula

Pages

3.2.4 Final heavy metal concentration =  $\frac{\text{ICP-OES concentration (ppm)} \times \text{Final Volume (ml)}}{\text{volume injected (ml)} \times \text{Initial weight (g)}}$  21

## LIST OF SYMBOLS

cm	centimeter
°C	degree Celsius
°	Degree
g	gram
µg/g	microgram per gram
µm	micrometer
mm	millimetre
ml	millilitre
km	kilometer
M	mole
%	percentage
±	plus-minus
N	no. of samples
~	approximate
ppm	parts per million
No.	Number
<	Less than

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>N</b>	<b>North</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>S.E</b>	<b>Standard error</b>
<b>As</b>	<b>arsenic</b>
<b>Cr</b>	<b>chromium</b>
<b>Cu</b>	<b>copper</b>
<b>Mn</b>	<b>manganese</b>
<b>Ni</b>	<b>nickel</b>
<b>Pb</b>	<b>lead</b>
<b>Zn</b>	<b>zinc</b>
<b>HNO<sub>3</sub></b>	<b>Nitric acid</b>
<b>AFS</b>	<b>Atomic Fluorescence Spectrometry</b>
<b>AAS</b>	<b>Atomic Absorption spectrometer</b>
<b>ICP-AES</b>	<b>Inductively Coupled Plasma with Atomic Emission Spectroscopy</b>
<b>ICP-OES</b>	<b>Inductively Coupled Plasma Optical Emission Spectroscopy</b>
<b>ICP-MS</b>	<b>Inductively Coupled Plasma with Mass Spectroscopy</b>
<b>UMS</b>	<b>Universiti Malaysia Sabah</b>
<b>FSSA</b>	<b>Faculty of Science and Natural Resources</b>
<b>BMRI</b>	<b>Borneo Marine Research Institute</b>
<b>ANOVA</b>	<b>Analysis of Variance</b>



<b>SPPS</b>	<b>Statistical Package for Social Science</b>
<b>EC</b>	<b>European Commission</b>
<b>MPHT</b>	<b>Ministry of Public Health Thailand</b>
<b>FDA</b>	<b>Food and Drug Administration of the United States</b>
<b>HKEPD</b>	<b>Hong Kong Environmental Protection Department</b>
<b>NHMRC</b>	<b>Australian Legal Requirements</b>
<b>FAO</b>	<b>Food and Agriculture Organization</b>
<b>WHO</b>	<b>World Health Organization</b>
<b>JECFA</b>	<b>Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Addictive</b>
<b>ICES</b>	<b>International Council for the Exploration of the Seas</b>
<b>ABIA</b>	<b>Brazilian Ministry of Health</b>
<b>EOSQC</b>	<b>Egyptian Organization for Standardization and Quality Control</b>
<b>TUI</b>	<b>Tolerable upper intake level</b>
<b>UNEP</b>	<b>United Nation Environment Programme</b>

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 General background

Bivalves are essential protein sources in human diet besides meat and poultry products as they provide human with omega-3 that is an unsaturated fat that can diminish cholesterol level and coronary illness, stroke and pre-mature birth (Daviglius *et al.*, 2002; Patterson 2002). Bivalves are rich in protein, calcium, phosphorus, fluorine, and iodine, polyunsaturated and unsaturated fats, and insoluble vitamins which have hypocholesterolic impact against atherosclerosis or cardiovascular diseases (Ismail, 2005; Ikem & Egiebor, 2005). The benefits of bivalves to human are unquestionable.

Despite these benefits, shellfishes could bring about negative effects to health. There has been a rising evidence of heavy metal intoxication that lead to health risk (Jin *et al.*, 2011). Although some metal elements are essential to the human body, others can cause harm to biological system. Numerous marine aquatic organisms such as bivalves can potentially become contaminated by different contaminants due to anthropogenic activities and natural emissions especially activities which involved heavy metals (Langston *et al.*, 1998). These filter feeder species can accumulate high concentrations of heavy metals and often use as the indicator of presence of heavy metals in an aquatic environment (Langston *et al.*, 1998).

Bivalves are known to filter between twenty and one hundred liters of surrounding waters a day. In doing so, they accumulate natural or anthropogenic contaminants. Upon consumption, they present these contaminants to the consumers (Richards, 1988; Lees, 2000 and Robertson, 2007). According to Agusa *et al.* (2005),



heavy metals which are accumulated in the bivalve tissues may come from the sediments, water column and some suspended particulate matters. These contaminants must be evaluated before consumption of bivalves to avoid hazards to human (Usydus *et al.*, 2008).

In recent years, investigation on the benefits and risk of aquatic organisms to human health is growing tremendously (Domingo *et al.*, 2007; Mahaffey, 2004). A few bodies such as the United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP) and Food Agriculture Organization (FAO) have emphasized the requirements to check the substantial metals presence in the nature (UNEP, 1996).

It is said that less prepared food are healthier but somehow, it does not comply to all food products especially bivalves, which could bring risk to human health if eaten raw or half cooked (Murchie *et al.*, 2005). However, bivalves are normally negligibly prepared and eaten raw or half cooked in many societies (Romalde *et al.*, 1994; Lees, 2000 and Murchie *et al.*, 2005). Consumption of bivalves which are contaminated with high level of heavy metals can lead to a positive risk of cancer (Gagnon *et al.*, 2004).

The increase in human population in certain areas and the expansion of industrial activities intensify the exposure of bivalves to heavy metals contaminants (Lee *et al.*, 1999; Lees, 2000 & Brands *et al.*, 2005). Bivalves inhabit estuarine areas and coastal waters are easily exposed to these pollutants (Burkhardt & Calci, 2000; Croci *et al.*, 2002).

According to Hernroth *et al.* (2012), the uncontrolled runoff from the rainfall events, septic tank leakages, agricultural and industrial discharges, are all flow into the coastal waters and bring along the contaminants which might poses health risk both to human and marine organisms.

Such data are easily available and well established in other parts of the world where monitoring activities are actively and regularly taking place. However, this is not the case in Sabah, Malaysia. Hence, this study evaluates the heavy metals contamination in bivalves along the northwest coast of Sabah.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Coastal zones are important areas for both fishery resources and development (Castro *et al.*, 1999; Usero *et al.*, 2005). In many developing countries, many of these coastal zones are utilized for industrialization and agricultural activities. Such activities, if not monitored properly, may contribute to the heavy metals contamination in the coastal waters and cause harm to many aquatic organisms (Yu *et al.*, 2011; Muhammad *et al.*, 2011). Similar development is also seen along the northwest coast of Sabah which could potentially affect the marine organisms such as bivalves in the area. Consequently, it elevates the health risk to humans who consume them.

## 1.3 Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- 1) To measure the heavy metals concentration of bivalves, Marsh Clam (*Polymesoda expansa*) and Green Mussel (*Perna viridis*) along the coastal areas particularly Kota Marudu, Kota Belud, Tuaran and Sepanggar.
- 2) To compare the heavy metals concentrations in Marsh Clam (*Polymesoda expansa*) and Green Mussel (*Perna viridis*) collected from the sampling sites.

## 1.4 Hypotheses

Bivalves from coastal waters of Tuaran district are expected to contain high levels of heavy metals contamination than Kota Belud, Kota Marudu and Sepanggar.

## 1.5 Significance of study

This study fills in the knowledge gap about the status of heavy metals contamination in commercial bivalves particularly green mussels (*Perna viridis*) and marsh clams (*Polymesoda expansa*) collected from coastal areas on the northwest coast of Sabah, particularly in Kota Marudu, Kota Belud, Tuaran and Sepanggar

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Biology of Bivalves

Phylum Mollusca is among the most abundance marine invertebrate groups. Invertebrates that fall under phylum Mollusca such as class Bivalvia are unsegmented, consists of hard external calcium carbonate divided into two halves shell surrounding the internal organs. The two halves are hinged and have a very powerful adductor muscles that draw them tightly together to protect the soft body tissues (Reese *et al.*, 2008). A large muscular foot usually use for locomotion, securing food and also for anchorage purposes.

According to Morrissey & Sumich (2012), marine bivalve includes clams, oysters, mussels and scallops are all aquatic invertebrates and can easily be found from intertidal areas to below 5000 m water depth. Bivalves lack of radula but they consist of gills. The gills are covered with cilia. Cilia help bivalves to circulate water for exchange of gas, filter and sorting out the tiny food particles that trapped around mucus that secreted over the gills surfaces.

Bivalves are specialized to feed on suspended particles such as bacteria, phytoplankton, detrital particles found in the sediments or in water column (Navarro & Thompson 1997). Some bivalves are burrowers such as clams but most bivalves attach on to rocks, corals or other suitable surfaces (Castro & Michael, 2005).



## **2.2 Feeding behavior of Bivalves**

There are two types of feeding behavior in bivalves which are the suspension feeders and deposit feeders. The deposit or facultative suspension feeders can be observed from their morphology of siphon (Yonge, 1949).

According to Navarro *et al.* (2008), the suspension feeder bivalves obtain food such as the suspended particulate particles from the water column. On the other hand, the deposit feeders feed on particulate organic material deposited on the sediments. Navarro & Thompsan (1997) state that, this food sources for deposit feeders are produced by the benthic primary productivity and organic particles. For examples, phytoplankton, bio-deposits or detritus particles that are settling from the water column.

The suspension and deposited feeders will have different levels of limitation of food availability and there will be competition for food among bivalve species. For example, deposited feeders bivalves, the food sources are limited compared to suspension feeders (Levinton, 1972). The limited food sources on the sediments for deposited feeders and unlimited food availability from the water column for suspension feeders would be the factors of the different types of feeding behavior in bivalves (Cadée, 1984; Hummel, 1985 and 'Olafsson, 1986).

Some bivalves would change their feeding behavior from deposit feeder to suspension feeder depending on the limitation of food availability in a particular area (Cadée, 1984; Hummel, 1985 and 'Olafsson, 1986).

## **2.3 Accumulation of heavy metals in Bivalves**

The most crucial source of heavy metals bioaccumulation in bivalve molluscs is from suspended particles such as from the water column, in the case of deposited feeders heavy metals are obtained from sediments (Bryan, 1976).

According to Phillips (1976), the ability of bivalves to accumulate heavy metals in the organs such as digestive gland and gills (Jocelyn & Jean, 2009) in its soft tissue from

the marine environment is well known and has become a focus in research since half a decade ago. Metals that are known as metallic chemical elements that contain high level of density and are very toxic and poisonous even in low quantity is referred to heavy metals (Jin *et al.*, 2011). Arsenic (As), lead (Pb), mercury (Hg), cadmium (Cd) and chromium (Cr) are very toxic even at low concentration (Govind & Madhuri, 2014). Some essential elements such as manganese (Mn), iron (Fe), cobalt (Co), copper (Cu), zinc (Zn) and molybdenum (Mo) if in high concentrations are also known as heavy metals (Khaled, 2004).

According to Turkmen *et al.* (2008), metals for example iron (Fe), copper (Cu), zinc (Zn) and manganese (Mg), are important metals in biological system to maintain the human body metabolism but very toxic if consumed at higher concentration. Other metals for example mercury (Hg), lead (Pb) and cadmium (Cd) are harmful to biological system even in small quantity.

Similar to the essential metals, the non-essentials metals once taken up by bivalves will also be accumulated in their tissues (Jakimska *et al.*, 2011). Aquatic organisms such as bivalves from phylum Mollusca accumulate both essential and non-essential metals during respiration, feeding or via absorption onto their body surface and are stored in various parts in their tissues (Denton & Burdon-Jones, 1981; Vigh *et al.*, 1996).

The toxic heavy metals do not impact the environment and organisms immediately the effects usually become apparent after a few years (Danis, 2006). The process of heavy metals accumulation in the soft tissues and organs of bivalves are species-dependent and related to the metabolism and detoxification mechanisms in the species. As a consequence, we may find that variety of species from same environment to have different levels of heavy metal concentration accumulated in their tissues and organs (Ritterhoff & Zauke, 2003; Kahle & Zauke, 2003 and Prowe, 2006).



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