

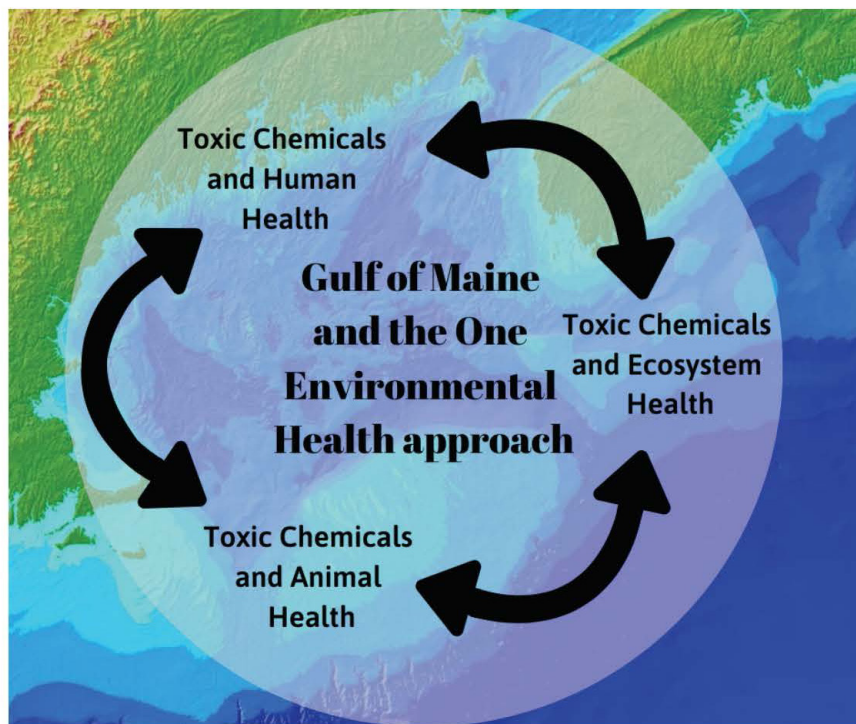
## Metal Levels in Whales from the Gulf of Maine: A One Environmental Health Approach

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In this session, using actual data from a research study, students will review the level of metals from whale biopsies to analyze trends and make inferences about ecosystem health in the Gulf of Maine.

The Gulf of Maine serves as an important aquatic ecosystem for many marine organisms. Whales are one of the most important species in the ocean that migrate there each year; however, scientists have begun to see a drop in whales' overall fitness. These whales—such as humpback, fin, and minke—play a key role in supporting the phytoplankton population by fertilizing the water. These plankton absorb copious amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, which in turn creates a healthier environment. Scientists have put whale health on high priority given whales' prolonged stretch on the endangered species list. To research whale fitness and health in relation to their connections to their environment's health, the One Environmental Health approach has emerged.

One Environmental Health recognizes relationships between human health, organism health, and ecosystem health. Scientists are working together with the goal to understand the relationship between the health of an organism and the health of the environment.



*The One Environmental Health approach in the Gulf of Maine.*