

TRIBUTYLTIN (TBT) IN ANTIFOULING PAINTS
- AN ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD

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ABSTRACT

Early in the 1970s organotins were introduced as effective components in marine antifouling paints. They soon showed to be extremely effective for their purpose and became common world-wide. However, serious environmental impact was found in the form of a high toxicity, a high potential for bioaccumulation, and specific long-term effects known as imposex (development of male characters in females of snails). Restrictions for the use of TBT were adopted in many countries but usually only valid for vessels less than 25 m in length. Still after some years of partial ban, the harm of TBT is clearly seen in most coastal areas as evidenced from studies along the Swedish west coast and in Iceland.