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Contact CEH NORA team at
noraceh@ceh.ac.uk

1 **Key factors affecting liver PBDE concentrations in sparrowhawks**
2 **(*Accipiter nisus*)**

3

4 John D. Crosse^{a,b}, Richard F. Shore^{a*}, Kevin C. Jones^b & M. Glória Pereira^a

5 ^aNERC Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Lancaster Environment Centre, Library Avenue,
6 Bailrigg, Lancaster, LA1 4AP, U.K.

7 ^bLancaster Environment Centre, Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA1 4YQ, U.K.

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15 *Corresponding author:

16 Richard F. Shore

17 Tel: +44 (0)1524 595867

18 Fax: +44 (0)1524 61536

19 e-mail:rfs@ceh.ac.uk

20

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22 ABSTRACT

23 High PBDE concentrations have been detected in the eggs of the sexually dimorphic
24 Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*) but little is known about contamination levels in
25 adult birds and how this may vary with age and sex. We characterised liver PBDE
26 concentrations in 59 sparrowhawks that had died in central Britain between 1998 and 2009
27 and determined how concentrations varied with sex, age, body condition and breeding status.
28 Five BDE congeners (99>153>47>100>154) predominated and Σ PBDE concentrations were
29 10-15 fold and 2-3 fold higher in starved than non-starved adult and juvenile sparrowhawks,
30 respectively. This was likely due to a combination of remobilisation of residues from other
31 tissues and liver wastage. Liver Σ PBDE concentrations did not vary with sex but were
32 greater in adults than juveniles, suggestive of accumulation with age. Overall, liver Σ PBDE
33 concentrations ranged from 43.4 to 68,040 ng/g lipid weight, amongst the highest
34 concentrations reported in birds anywhere.

35

36 **Keywords:** polybrominated diphenyl ethers, sparrowhawk, body condition, penta-BDE,
37 starvation, bioaccumulation, age class

38

39 **Capsule:** Liver PBDE concentrations in UK sparrowhawks are amongst the
40 highest reported anywhere but vary markedly with body condition and age
41 class.

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43

44 **1. Introduction**

45 Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) are flame retardants that have been used
46 globally in a variety of products since the 1970s (Prevedouros et al., 2004; Rahman et al.,
47 2001). There were principally three types of technical formulations, Penta- (PeBDE), Octa-
48 (OBDE) and Deca- (DeBDE). The PeBDE and OBDE mixtures are no longer used in the
49 European Union and North America but environmental releases from in-use products still
50 occur, particularly through dust and vapour release (Batterman et al., 2009). PBDEs are
51 readily assimilated into food webs and there have been numerous studies of contamination in
52 people and wildlife; these have been reviewed by Chen and Hale, (2010); Hites (2004); Law
53 et al., (2006).

54 Birds have been widely used as monitors or sentinels of environmental contaminants,
55 including PBDEs. Measurement of PBDE concentrations in tissues and eggs has been carried
56 out to characterise the extent of contamination (and associated potential toxicity) and both
57 temporal and spatial trends in contamination (Chen and Hale, 2010; Marteinson et al., 2010;
58 Newsome et al., 2010). These studies have demonstrated that, in European aquatic systems,
59 PBDE contamination in piscivorous birds rose during the 1980s, peaked in the 1990s, and
60 then fell sharply (Crosse et al., 2012a; Sellstrom et al., 2003), largely reflecting modelled
61 usage of PeBDE formulations (Prevedouros et al., 2004). However, the nature of long-term
62 time trends in PBDE concentrations in terrestrial-feeding birds in Europe is equivocal, with
63 decreases in recent years reported in some studies, but not others (Bustnes et al., 2011; Leslie
64 et al., 2011; Johansson et al., 2011). Variation between studies in observed trends over time
65 may be due to a number of factors, such as differences in the range of PBDEs that were
66 monitored, geographical variation in the extent of usage of PBDEs, inter-specific differences

67 in accumulation and metabolism, and differences in the pharmacokinetic partitioning of
68 PBDEs between different tissues that are then sampled for analysis.

69 Long term trends in contaminant concentration in terrestrial UK habitats have been
70 tracked previously by measuring concentrations in the eggs and body tissues of the Eurasian
71 sparrowhawk (*Accipter nisus*), a terrestrial species found throughout most of Britain and
72 which mostly preys on small birds (Newton, 1986). Previous studies have focussed on
73 determining temporal and spatial variation in organochlorine insecticides, polychlorinated
74 biphenyls, mercury and arsenic (Newton 1986; Newton et al., 1993; Erry et al., 1999;
75 Broughton et al. 2003) but a recent study has also reported UK long-term trends in PBDE
76 concentrations in sparrowhawks eggs (Crosse et al., 2012b). Sum PBDE (Σ PBDE)
77 concentrations were some of the highest concentrations ever reported in bird eggs or tissues
78 from Europe and were of a magnitude associated with adverse reproductive effects. Unlike
79 trends reported in the majority of studies from the rest of Europe, concentrations did not
80 decline after reaching peak levels in the late 1990s, despite the phasing out of PeBDE and
81 OBDE in the European Union.

82 Contaminant concentrations in the eggs of investment breeders (Drent and Daan,
83 1980) are thought largely to provide a snapshot of exposure in females in the days before egg
84 production, although female sparrowhawks can also eliminate bioaccumulated persistent
85 organic contaminants into eggs (Newton et al., 1981), presumably from retained fat deposits
86 laid down earlier. Eggs are therefore a readily available and homogeneous biomonitor of
87 exposure in females that can be directly related to reprotoxic effects, but the time period of
88 exposure may be uncertain. Egg concentrations do not provide direct information on body
89 residues in females or necessarily on exposure in males. The latter may be particularly true
90 for sexually dimorphic species such as the sparrowhawk where males and females specialise

91 on different sized prey, although male sparrowhawks feed females during the period when
92 eggs are developing (Newton.1986). Overall, egg residues may provide little or no
93 information on either the extent of bioaccumulation or the magnitude of residues [and
94 associated toxicity] in body tissues. The overall objective of the present paper was to more
95 fully characterise the large-scale PBDE contamination in sparrowhawks in Britain that was
96 revealed by the earlier analysis of eggs (Crosse et al., 2012b). The specific aims were to
97 characterise and quantify current PBDE concentrations in the sparrowhawk livers and
98 determine how concentrations varied with age class and sex. As part of this analysis, we also
99 examined whether liver PBDE concentrations were affected by body condition at the time of
100 death, as this has been shown to markedly influence the magnitude of liver concentrations of
101 other persistent organic pollutants (Wienburg and Shore, 2004).

102

103 **2. Materials and methods**

104 *2.1. Sample collection*

105 Dead sparrowhawks from throughout Britain were collected by volunteers and
106 submitted to the Predatory Bird Monitoring Scheme (<http://pbms.ceh.ac.uk/>; Walker et al.,
107 2008). Provenance, collection date, age, sex, body weight and body condition (assessed
108 visually using a six point scoring system) were recorded and a necropsy was performed
109 during which a putative cause of death was determined. Various body tissues were collected
110 from each carcass, weighed and archived at -20°C. However, whole liver and body weights
111 were not obtained for all birds, including some used in the present study, usually because
112 carcasses had been partly damaged through trauma or scavenging, or organs were provided
113 by taxidermists who had not recorded the body weight of the bird.

114 Archived livers from birds that had died between 1998 and 2009 from central
115 England, directly east and within 250 km of the Welsh border (**S.I. Figure 1**), were selected
116 for the present study. Sample selection was restricted in this way to minimise potential
117 confounding temporal and spatial variation; previous analysis of sparrowhawk eggs
118 suggested that exposure in females was largely constant across this time period and
119 geographical region (Crosse et al., 2012b). Selection of birds was further stratified such that
120 individuals were representative of one of eight groups characterised by sex (male/female),
121 age class (adult/ juvenile) and body condition (starved/ non-starved birds). Juveniles were
122 defined as birds that hatched in the current or previous calendar year while starved birds were
123 those which, at post-mortem inspection, had a complete lack of fat deposits or at most trace
124 amounts of fat typically around the heart but nowhere else. The numbers of birds in each of
125 the eight groups varied between five and 11 and the total number of birds analysed was 59.

126

127 *2.2. Determination of PBDE concentrations in livers*

128 For each bird, approximately 1g wet weight of liver (mean \pm SD: 0.97 ± 0.22 g) was
129 excised from various parts of the whole liver to obtain a representative sample, and was then
130 homogenised. Homogenates were weighed accurately, extracted and cleaned up, and lipid
131 content determined gravimetrically as described by Crosse et al. (2012a); the mean (\pm SD) %
132 lipid in livers was 6.88 ± 4.86 %. The cleaned-up extract was analysed by Gas
133 Chromatography Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS, Thermo-Finnigan Trace) fitted with a
134 ThermoQuest AS2000 autosampler and using a 30m CPSIL-8 CB pesticide column (0.25 mm
135 diameter, 0.12 μ m internal diameter) and calibrated using seven PBDE standards in a linear
136 range 2.5-250 pg/ul. Livers were analysed for a suite of 30 PBDE tri-Octa BDE congeners
137 (17, 28, 32, 35, 37, 47, 49, 51, 66, 71, 75, 77, 85, 99, 100, 118, 119, 126, 128, 138, 153, 154,
138 166, 183, 190, 196, 197, 201, 202, 203) as described by Crosse et al. (2012b). BDE209 was

139 not quantified as the above method was not amenable to its determination, returning poor
140 recovery figures.

141 The instrument Limit of Detection (LoD) was defined as the lowest observable
142 calibration standard (2.5 pg/ul for tri-hexa BDEs and BDE183 to 5 pg/ul for Octa BDEs)
143 which was equivalent to 0.25 ng and 0.5 ng, respectively, in the liver samples that were
144 analysed. Eight procedural blanks were run alongside the samples and these demonstrated
145 that there was no background contamination. Mean recoveries for ¹³C₁₂ labelled BDE
146 congeners 28, 47, 99, 100, 153, 154 and 183 (Wellington Laboratories, Guelph, Ontario,
147 Canada) ranged between 74.4 and 88.2% across homologue groups and concentrations were
148 recovery corrected using these data as described by Crosse et al. (2012a). To ensure
149 precision, a quality control (QC) standard, consisting of five PBDEs that encompassed tri-
150 hepta homologue groups at concentrations of 2.5-250 pg/ul, was analysed alongside
151 unknowns. Batches of samples were only fit if QC concentrations were +/- 10% of expected
152 values.

153

154 2.3. *Statistical analyses*

155 All statistical analysis was performed using Minitab 16.0. General linear models
156 (GLM) were used to determine whether age, sex, body condition and breeding status
157 significantly explained variation in the concentrations of individual PBDE congeners,
158 ΣPBDEs or physiological characteristics of the liver, such as liver mass and liver % lipid.
159 Because of the biologically plausible complex triple interactive effects of body condition, age
160 and sex on liver residues, we conducted analysis of the effects of age and body condition on
161 liver BDE concentrations in males and females separately. PBDE concentrations and % lipid
162 data were log and arcsine square-root transformed, respectively, so that the underlying

163 assumptions of equal variance and normality of residuals in the GLM were met. The majority
164 of congener data sets had some values recorded as below the LoD and, for congeners where
165 the percentage of values below the LoD was less than 80%, the below LoD values were
166 assigned an interpolated value following the method described by Hesel, (1990, 2006).

167

168

169 **3. Results**

170 The data associated with this study are available from the CEH Information Gateway
171 (<https://gateway.ceh.ac.uk/>) and can be identified from their digital object identifier:

172 <http://dx.doi.org/10.5285/1c4f835c-d243-4593-a9b4-71410b9b4bf0>

173

174 3.1. *Congener profiles and concentrations.*

175 A total of 26 congeners were detected in one or more livers. BDEs 47, 99, 100, 153
176 and 154 were detected in the livers of all the birds, BDEs 138 and 183 in >80%, and BDEs
177 66, 118, 119, 196, 197, 201, 202 in >50% of birds. Only BDEs 32, 128, 166, and 190 were
178 not detected in any of the livers. The PeBDE-associated congeners BDEs 99, 153, 47, 100
179 and 154 dominated the congener profile, comprising almost 90% of the Σ PBDE concentration
180 (Figure 1). The geometric mean concentrations of these congeners varied between 103 and
181 945 ng/g lipid weight (lwt) and were generally an order of magnitude higher than those of all
182 other detected congeners (Table 1 and S.I. Table 1). The two other most frequently occurring
183 congeners, the hepta-BDE 183 and the hexa-BDE 138, made lesser contributions to the
184 overall congener profile (Table 1, Figure 1). The concentrations of all seven congeners were
185 highly correlated with each other and with that of the Σ PBDEs ($r \geq 0.887$, $P < 0.001$ in all
186 cases). The octa-brominated BDEs 197, 201, 202 and 203 occurred in fewer livers but, when
187 present, were detected in similar amounts to BDE183; the geometric mean concentrations of

188 the other congeners, when detected, ranged from 4.42-31.5 ng/g lwt (S.I. Table 1). Overall,
189 the geometric mean Σ PBDE concentration was two-three fold higher than that that of BDE
190 99, the most abundant congener, and approximately at least an order of magnitude greater
191 than the concentrations of all other congeners (Table 1 and SI Table 1).

192

193 3.2 *Factors associated with variation in liver PBDE concentrations*

194 In male sparrowhawks, body condition and age class between them explained 51.3% of
195 the variation in liver Σ PBDE concentrations. Residues were higher in starved than in non-
196 starved birds and in adults compared with juveniles ($F_{(1,21)} \geq 5.28$, $P < 0.05$ in both cases;
197 Figure 2). The interaction term between age and body condition was also significant ($F_{(1,21)} =$
198 4.77 , $P < 0.05$) as the difference in liver concentrations between starved and non-starved birds
199 was 15-fold in adults but only two-fold in juveniles (Figure 2). In female sparrowhawks,
200 body condition explained 23.3% of variation in liver Σ PBDE concentration, residues again
201 being greater in starved than non-starved birds ($F_{(1,30)} = 8.87$, $P < 0.01$, Figure 2). However,
202 unlike in males, age class was not a significant factor in females nor was the interaction term
203 between age class and body condition ($F_{(1,30)} \leq 1.03$, $P > 0.05$ in both cases), even though
204 starvation was associated with an average elevation of liver Σ PBDE of 10 fold in adult
205 females but only three fold in juveniles (Figure 2). Unsurprisingly, given the high degree of
206 correlation between the concentrations of the individual main congeners and the Σ PBDE, the
207 effects of body condition and of age class (males only) on each of the individual main
208 congeners were similar to those on Σ PBDE concentrations (data not shown).

209 Starvation can affect liver concentrations of persistent organic pollutants potentially
210 by altering the lipid content of the liver, through liver wastage associated with starvation, and
211 through remobilisation of contaminants from fat depots and other tissues that subsequently
212 leads to increased accumulation of residues in the liver. We analysed whether starvation, as

213 measured by body condition, was associated with either altered liver lipid content or a
214 decrease in liver mass in all birds, and included age class and sex as additional factors in the
215 analysis. There was no effect of body condition, nor of sex or age class, on % liver lipid
216 content ($F_{(1,44)} \leq 1.93$, $P > 0.05$ for all factors/interaction terms; Figure 3), whereas both body
217 condition and sex were significantly associated with variation in liver mass ($F_{(1,44)} > 7.97$,
218 $P < 0.01$ in both cases; Figure 3). Liver mass, on average, was approximately 20% less in
219 starved than non-starved birds of the same sex and age class, and was also approximately
220 25% lower in males than females, reflecting sexual dimorphism in body weight (Figure 3).

221 One possible explanation why age class was a statistically significant predictor of
222 liver Σ PBDE concentrations in male but not female sparrowhawks may be because adult
223 breeding females transfer a proportion of their maternal PBDE burden into eggs. To test this
224 hypothesis, we examined whether liver PBDE concentrations in adult sparrowhawks that died
225 within the breeding season (April-September) were lower than in those collected outside the
226 breeding season (October-March). We included males in the analysis, as they effectively
227 acted as controls against which to test the hypothesis; body condition, sex, and season were
228 factors in the model. There was no effect of season, sex, nor any interaction between sex and
229 season, on liver Σ PBDE concentrations ($F_{(1,19)} < 0.39$, $P > 0.05$ in all cases; S.I, Figure 2). The
230 only significant factor affecting liver BDE concentration was body condition and
231 concentrations were greater in starved than non-starved birds ($F_{(1,19)} = 21.0$, $P < 0.001$; S.I.
232 Figure 2). There were likewise no significant effects of season on liver concentrations of any
233 of the major congeners (data not shown).

234 The above model indicated that sex did not significantly explain variation in liver
235 Σ PBDE concentrations in adult sparrowhawks. Analysis of data for juvenile birds showed
236 that there was likewise no effect of sex on liver Σ PBDEs in this age class ($F_{(1,28)} = 0.25$,
237 $P > 0.05$).

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239

240 **4. Discussion**

241 *4.1. Congener profile*

242 The seven congeners that dominated the BDE congener profile in sparrowhawk livers
243 (99>153>47>100>154>183>138) occurred in similar relative proportions in most birds.

244 Concentrations were also in broadly similar proportions to those in the PeBDE technical
245 mixtures DE-71 and Bromkal 70-5DE (Figure 1). This suggests the PeBDE mixture is the
246 most important source of PBDE contamination in sparrowhawks, although the detection of
247 octa-brominated congeners also indicates some contribution of the OBDE and/or DeBDE
248 mixture, of which these congeners are either components or potential degradation products.

249 This congener profile in livers was consistent with that detected in sparrowhawk eggs from
250 the same area (Crosse et al., 2012b) and demonstrates that the congeners associated with the
251 PeBDE technical mixture remain a major source of contamination, despite the banning or
252 phasing out the technical products in the European Union.

253

254 *4.2. The effect of condition and age on liver PBDE concentrations*

255 The concentrations of BDEs that were detected varied with a number of factors.
256 Starvation was clearly the most important, with concentrations of the major individual BDE
257 congeners and Σ PBDEs elevated in birds in poor body condition. This was, in part, due to a
258 reduction in liver size, presumably a result of liver glycogen being depleted during starvation.
259 However, the elevation in Σ PBDE concentrations in starved birds (10-15 fold in adults and 2-
260 3 fold in juveniles) was disproportionate to the degree of liver wastage (25% reduction in
261 mass). This strongly indicates that liver BDE residues are elevated during periods of
262 starvation because of remobilisation of residues from fat stores and possibly other biological

263 compartments. Starvation has been found similarly to elevate liver PCB residues in raptors
264 (Wienburg & Shore, 2004) and to affect the concentrations of persistent organic pollutants,
265 including PBDEs, in the eggs of tawny owls (*Strix aluco*) (Bustnes et al., 2011).

266 The presence of greater liver Σ PBDE concentrations in adult than juvenile males, and
267 the difference between adults and juveniles in the impact that starvation had on liver residues,
268 are both consistent with bioaccumulation of BDEs with age, although differences in dietary
269 exposure between adults and juveniles cannot be ruled out. Adult birds, because they are
270 older, have longer than juveniles to bioaccumulate residues in fat and other tissues and so
271 larger residues are subsequently remobilised during starvation. Such bioaccumulation is
272 likely to vary to some extent between congeners and, in the present study, was most readily
273 detectable for the hexa-brominated BDEs 138, 153 and 154 in males; age class alone was a
274 significant factor ($P \leq 0.01$; data not shown) in the statistical models for these congeners. All
275 three have been reported to have long biological half-lives and/or high biomagnification
276 factors (BMFs) in birds (Drouillard et al., 2007; Lindberg et al., 2004; Voorspoels et al.,
277 2007), likely due to their high Log_{Kow} values (Voorspoels et al., 2007). BDE183 has been
278 reported to have an even higher BMF (Voorspoels et al., 2007). Although age class alone
279 was not statistically significant in our model that examined which factors explained variation
280 in liver BDE183 residues in males, the interaction between age class and body condition was
281 significant ($P < 0.05$; data not shown). This indicated that residues were more elevated in
282 starved adults than juveniles. This is again consistent with accumulation with age.

283 Liver PBDE concentrations in female sparrowhawks did not differ from those in
284 males, suggesting that exposure of males and females to BDEs is similar, despite females
285 taking different, typically larger, prey species than males (Newton, 1986). The effect of
286 starvation in elevating liver residues was also the same in females as males. Although there
287 was no statistically significant evidence that liver BDE residues in females increased with age

288 class, liver ΣPBDE concentrations did not differ between adult males and females. Such a
289 difference might be expected if males bioaccumulated residues but females did not.
290 Furthermore, starvation had a much bigger impact on liver residues in adult females than in
291 juveniles, just as in males. This is also consistent with the concept that both males and
292 females bioaccumulate PBDEs with age.

293 Analysis of the factors associated with variation in liver PBDE residues in females
294 may be confounded by maternal transfer of PBDE burdens into eggs. Such transfer clearly
295 occurs as PBDEs have been detected in sparrowhawk eggs (Jaspers et al., 2006; Chen et al.,
296 2007; Crosse et al., 2012b), but it is unknown to what extent egg PBDE concentrations are
297 derived from maternal diet or from the female's body burden. Altricial or semi-altricial birds,
298 such as raptors, are thought to use less maternal lipids and proteins in the formation of eggs
299 compared to precocial species (Drouillard & Norstrom, 2001; Verreault et al., 2006). It has
300 been estimated that, in chickens, some 1- 20% of maternal body burdens of some
301 organohalogen compounds are transferred to eggs (Bargar et al., 2001) although this can
302 further vary with physiological and chemical factors (Van den Steen et al., 2009). Thus,
303 transfer of maternal PBDE burden into eggs in sparrowhawks may be relatively small. In the
304 present study, liver PBDE concentrations of adult females that died between April and
305 September (a period covering the breeding season) were not lower than those outside of this
306 period, nor did they differ from concentrations in males. This suggests that maternal transfer
307 of PBDEs into eggs does not result in significant depletion of female liver BDE residues in
308 sparrowhawks. However, it was not known whether birds that had died between April and
309 September had laid eggs and so the reported liver concentrations may be representative of a
310 mixture of pre and post laying females. Thus, our ability to detect significant transfer of
311 PBDEs from females to eggs from analysis of liver concentrations in this way may be
312 limited.

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4.3 Comparisons with PBDE contamination in birds elsewhere

Overall, liver Σ PBDE concentrations ranged from 43.4 – 68,040 ng/g lwt (equivalent to 7.93 to 7,447 ng/g wet wt). To the best of our knowledge, 68,000 ng/g lw is currently the highest (tri – octa) Σ PBDE concentration recorded in birds anywhere (Guerra et al., 2012) and is only exceeded by the (tetra – deca) Σ PBDE reported in the egg of a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) from the north-eastern USA (Chen et al., 2008). Geometric mean liver concentrations in sparrowhawks in the present study (2440 ng/g lwt) are within the range of terrestrial bird liver concentrations reported by Chen and Hale (2010) in a global review of PBDEs in birds. When compared with data for other sparrowhawk species elsewhere, Σ PBDE concentrations in this study were of a similar magnitude to those reported in birds from mainland Europe (Jaspers et al., 2006; Voorspoels et al., 2006), but exceeded mean liver Σ PBDE concentrations in Japanese sparrowhawks (*Accipiter gularis*) from China by roughly five-fold (Chen et al, 2007). The similarities in Σ PBDE liver concentrations between those reported in this study and other sparrowhawks from mainland Europe contrasts with the observations by Crosse et al. (2012) that Σ PBDE concentrations in the eggs of UK sparrowhawks were considerably higher than those of other European birds. This apparent anomaly may be related to differences between studies in the body condition of birds which has a major impact on the magnitude of liver residues.

The toxicological significance of the liver PBDE residues in the present study is unknown. This is because, in contrast to studies on PBDEs and other organohalogen compounds in eggs (Chen et al., 2010; Fernie et al., 2009; Harris and Elliott, 2011; Henny et al., 2009; Marteinson et al., 2010), there is a lack of data that relates the potential toxicity of PBDEs in avian livers to adverse effects. This is an area that merits further investigation.

338 **5. Conclusions**

339 The present study has demonstrated that sparrowhawks in Britain accumulate some of
340 the highest PBDE residues reported for terrestrial-feeding birds anywhere. Although this
341 species is sexually dimorphic, there was no evidence that accumulation differed between
342 males and females but it was higher in adults than juveniles. Starvation resulted in massive
343 elevation of liver residues, caused primarily by remobilisation of residues (from body fat and
344 potentially other organs) and partly from liver wastage. It seems likely therefore, that adult
345 birds are likely to have the highest circulating liver PBDE concentrations, particularly during
346 periods of starvation when they are unable to catch sufficient prey to maintain body reserves,
347 and so may be most at risk from any toxic effects of PBDEs. The key role that body
348 condition plays in mediating liver PBDE concentrations highlights the need to account for
349 nutritional status when utilising raptor livers as a biomonitoring tool for PBDEs.

350

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359

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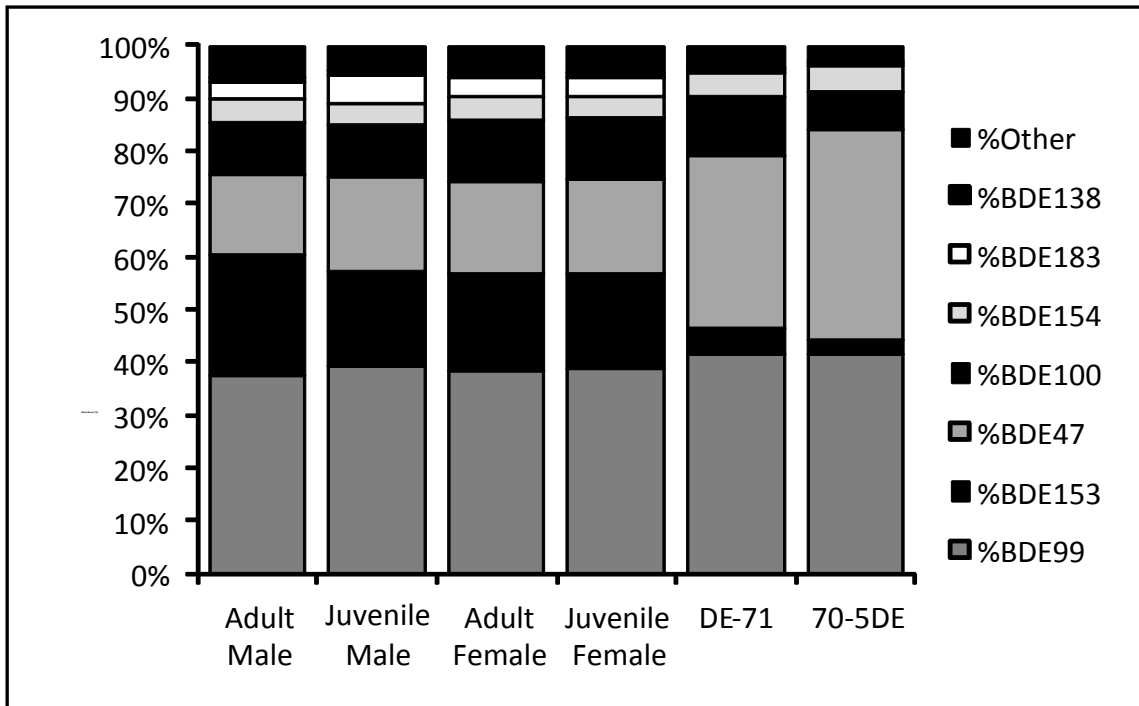
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493 **Figure 1.** PBDE congener profile in sparrowhawk livers from birds that died between 1998
494 and 2009, and in the DE-71 and 70-5DE PeBDE technical formulations (La Guardia et al
495 2006). Relative abundance data for each congener in livers was the % contribution to the
496 Σ PBDE concentration and the average for all livers within the age and sex category was
497 taken.

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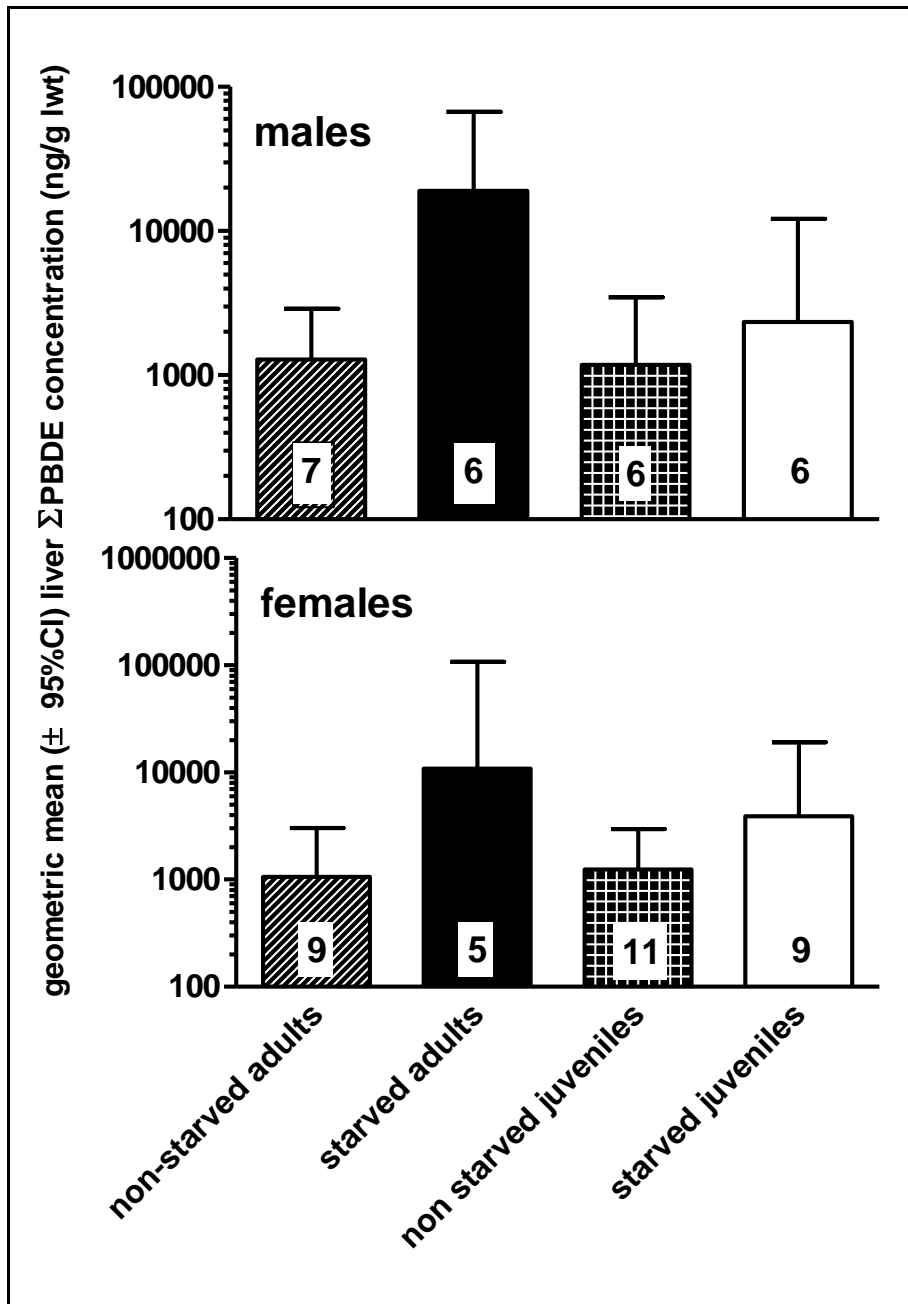
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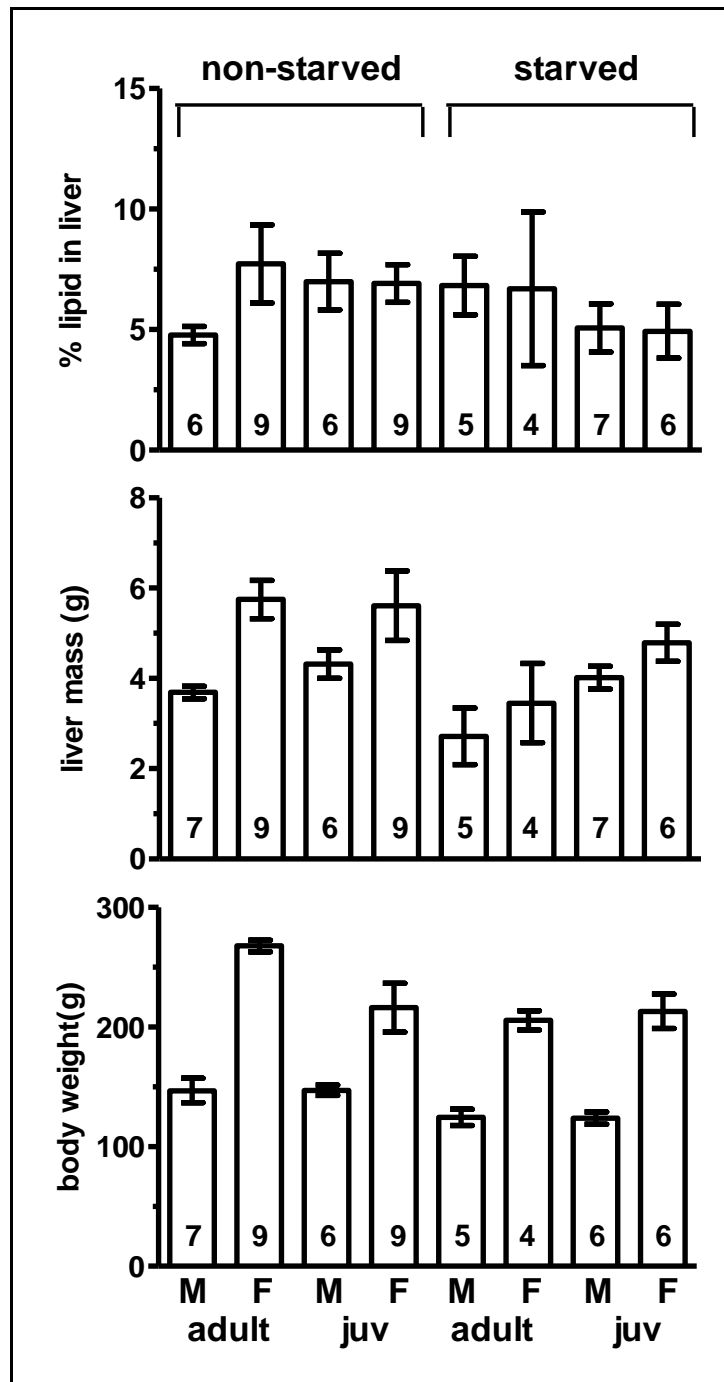


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509 **Figure 2.** Geometric mean (95% Confidence Interval) liver ΣPBDE concentrations (ng/g lwt)
 510 in male (upper graph) and female (lower graph) sparrowhawks characterised by age and body
 511 condition. Numbers in columns indicate number of birds in each group.

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516 **Figure 3.** Mean (\pm SEM) % lipid liver, liver mass (g) and body weight (g) in sparrowhawks
 517 characterised by sex, age and body condition. Numbers in columns indicate number of birds
 518 in each group.

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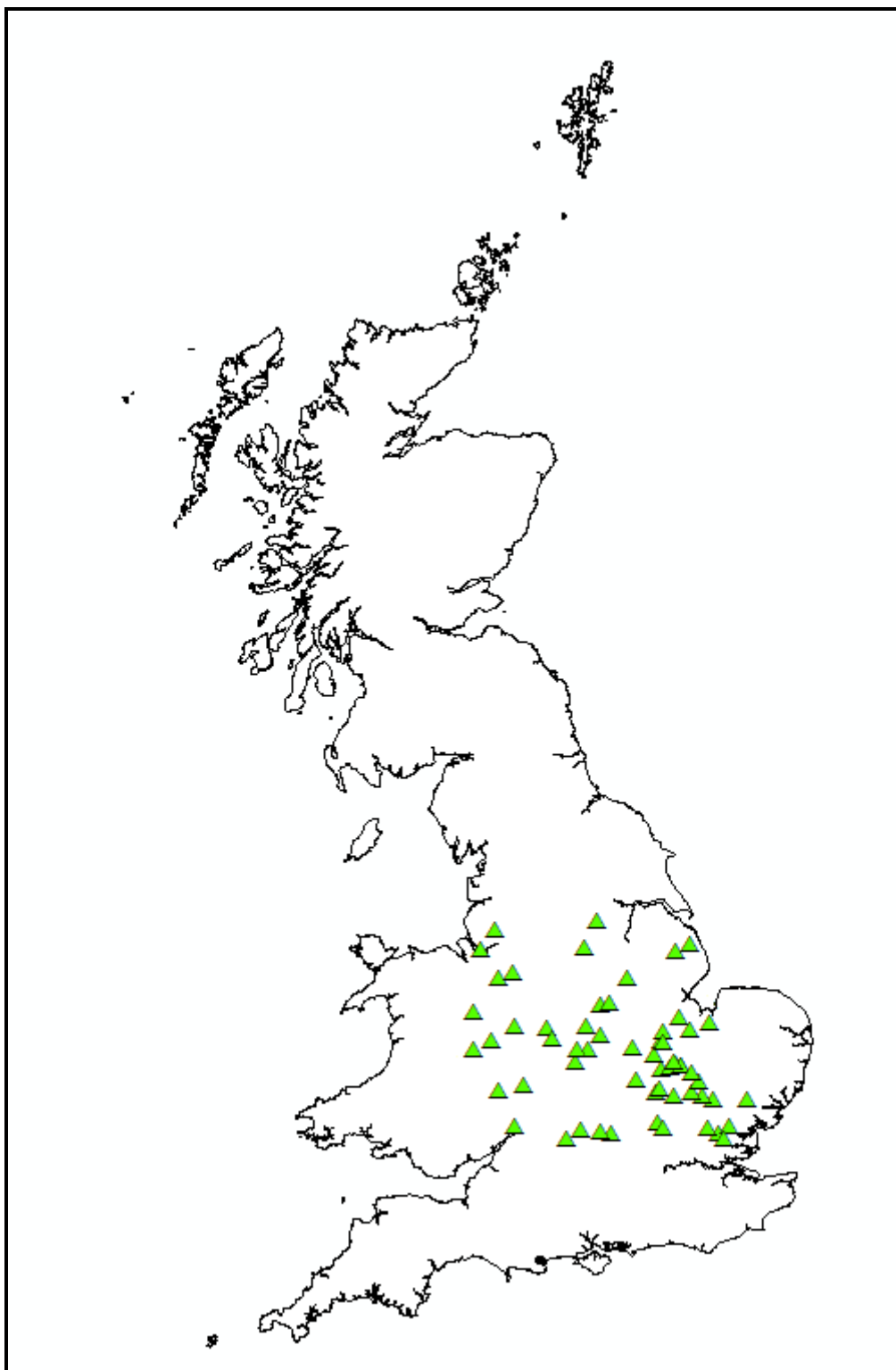
520 Table 1 Geometric mean and range (ng/g lwt) of concentrations for Σ PBDEs and the seven
 521 PBDE congeners detected in $\geq 80\%$ of the 59 sparrowhawks analysed. Geometric mean
 522 values for concentrations calculated on a wet wt basis are also given for ease of comparison
 523 with other studies.

	Geometric mean (ng/g lipid) ¹	Range	Geometric mean (ng/g wet wt)
BDE 47	368	22.1-14400	23.7
BDE 99	945	44.4-28700	56.7
BDE 100	255	12.1-8600	15.3
BDE 138	24.0	1.79-473	1.38
BDE 153	452	12.6-16100	27.1
BDE 154	103	4.34-4150	6.20
BDE 183	63.8	1.36-2100	3.66
Σ PBDE	2440	117-68000	146

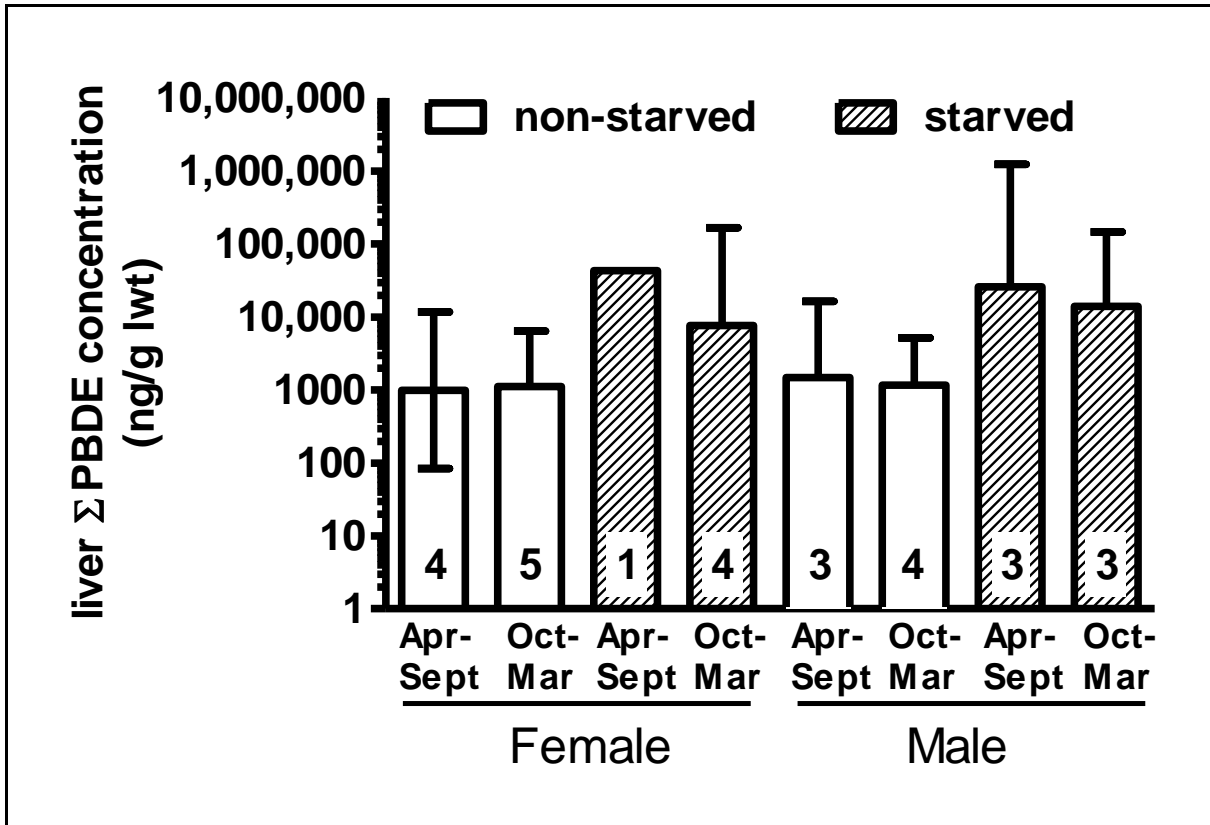
524 ¹Median (range) % lipid content in livers was 5.64 % (1.45-26.9%)

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531 **S.I. Figure 1:** Map of locations where dead sparrowhawks were found.



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534 **S.I. Figure 2:** Geometric mean (and 95% Confidence Interval) in liver ΣPBDE
 535 concentrations (ng/g lw) in adult sparrowhawks grouped by sex, body condition, and month
 536 of death. Numbers in columns indicate number of birds in each group.

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549 S.I. Table.1 Geometric mean, and range (ng/g lipid) of the liver concentrations of PBDE
550 congeners (17, 28, 35, 37, 49, 51, 66, 71, 75, 118, 119, 126, 196, 197, 201, 202, 203) that
551 were present at detectable levels in less than 80% of sparrowhawks. Mean values are only for
552 those livers that had detectable residues

553

	Number of samples < LoD	Geometric mean in livers with detected residues (ng/g lipid)	range
BDE 17	4	4.42	1.19-11.7
BDE 28	11	10.1	3.57-30.8
BDE 35	28	17.3	0.79-416
BDE 37	10	7.58	4.7-13.5
BDE 49	10	15.0	5.84-47.3
BDE 51	11	8.18	0.31-22.7
BDE 66	32	19.1	1.75-113
BDE 71	12	17.4	4.61-63.0
BDE 75	9	9.46	2.05-38.1
BDE77	17	11.9	1.02-41.9
BDE 85	23	17.6	1.66-182
BDE 118	38	31.5	2.16-330
BDE 119	29	25.0	3.93-217
BDE126	18	13.7	2.10-199
BDE 196	33	28.3	2.67-505
BDE 197	43	59.7	5.05-1530
BDE 201	30	54.6	2.83-537
BDE 202	36	52.3	6.17-1530
BDE 203	8	48.9	13.3-363

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