



Opinion

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Influence of Zooplankton in Monitoring Water Quality



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Abstract

This concise document reports on the urgency of water quality monitoring and the important indicative role of zooplankton in water bodies. Without a unified framework, we call on our peers to accelerate research and develop relevant zooplankton metrics to evaluate water quality.

Keywords: Influence; zooplankton; Monitoring water quality

Introduction

Eutrophication is a growing problem on the hydrological map of the world, attributable to urbanization and industrialization (point sources), and the extensive use of their waters for farming and cattle ranching (diffuse sources), which has compromised the quality of water [1]. The excessive enrichment of waters with anthropogenic sources of nutrients especially nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) lead to the transformation of oligotrophic water bodies to mesotrophic, eutrophic, and finally hypertrophic. Mesotrophic and eutrophic phases exhibit intermediate and rich levels of nutrients and show increasing and serious water quality problems, respectively [2]. Over the long term, eutrophication will lead to ecosystem destruction, thereby restricting water use for fisheries, recreation, industry, and drinking. For typical example, associated periodic surface blooms of cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) occur in drinking water supplies and may pose a serious health hazard to animals and humans. Thus, to monitor water quality changes and avoid disasters, the assessment of ecological status should be given priority in eutrophication study [3].

Zooplankton constitute a functional link between phytoplankton and bacterioplankton and higher trophic levels, such as fish and invertebrate larvae. Due to this important relationship with all taxonomic groups in aquatic environments, the population abundance of these organisms as well as biomass, diversity, and richness can be viewed as an interesting bio-indicator of the overall ecological condition of the whole waterbody [4-6]. By contrast, zooplankton have a strong indicator value, which cannot be covered by sampling fish and phytoplankton without a very comprehensive and costly effort. Thus, zooplankton can be

a useful tool for the determination of ecological status to monitor water quality [7].

Conclusion

Although many ecologists have studied the relationship between trophic state and zooplankton community structure, there is no unified metrics for ecological evaluation of different water bodies [8-9]. Therefore, we call on our counterparts around the world to include zooplankton as a central biological quality element in the water framework directive assessments and undertake similar regional calibration exercises to obtain zooplankton metrics for monitoring water quality.

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