

Structure and dynamics of the benthos in ICES waters (A)

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The basis of this theme session is the 1986 North Sea Benthos Survey of the BEWG and the North Sea Benthos Project 2000 of the SGNSBP, as well as additional studies in the same time frame and from other benthos studies in ICES waters. Habitat information was gathered in a very comprehensive form in 2000, backing up the unique and synoptic benthic sampling programmes. The theme session shall attract presentations about joint North Sea studies on benthic ecology and related fields (sedimentology, fishery impact, anthropogenic disturbance, and others). Examples of biotope/habitat mapping are also welcome. Main presentations are expected from members of the ICES SGNSBP who are finalizing their *Cooperative Research Report* with valuable information on North Sea benthos and habitats. Historical comparisons and the search for environmental change will be the main focus of this theme session as well as a look forward and the goals of future studies. The session is also open for similar studies from other regional seas in the ICES area with the aim of identifying similar trends and/or developments in benthos structure and dynamics in relation to environmental change and human disturbance.

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