

Theme Session A

Gelatinous zooplankton on a global perspective: interactions with fisheries and consequences for socio–economics

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Gelatinous zooplankton, such as ctenophores, jellyfish and pelagic tunicates, contain groups belonging to the fastest growing metazoans on Earth, contributing more to secondary production than crustacean zooplankton during periods in certain regions. Irrespectively, gelatinous zooplankton remain understudied and disregarded in most foodweb investigations and are largely viewed as a dead end in the food chain. Lately, evidence has accumulated that gelatinous zooplankton populations have increased and likely have benefitted from global change. Further, anthropogenic stressors such as eutrophication, bio-invasions and overfishing have been correlated with increased jellyfish and ctenophore abundances with documented changes in foodweb structure, functioning and productivity of many marine ecosystems around the world. Especially in the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, the East Asian marginal seas, the Benguela Current, and fjord systems around northern Europe, bio-invasions and blooms of gelatinous zooplankton have gained public attention, with documented shifts in the foodweb structure, functioning and corresponding socio-economic consequences for fisheries and tourism. This theme session aims at addressing the role, position and importance of gelatinous zooplankton organisms for marine ecosystems and their impact on foodweb structure, functioning and overall productivity.

We encourage presentations on gelatinous zooplankton and their:

- spatial and temporal distribution patterns
- contributions to carbon cycling in pelagic and benthic ecosystems including higher trophic levels
- population dynamics or species interactions of native and invasive groups
- socio-economic impacts e.g. on fisheries, aquaculture and tourism
- potential as a fast growing, renewable resource
- responses to global change including modelling studies and projections