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AB THEME SECTION 1

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Bioturbation in aquatic environments: linking past and present



Sediment profile at 80 m water depth off the Dogger Bank, North Sea, showing a shallow mixing depth despite evidence of substantial infaunal activity (burrows, tube structures, mounds).

Photo: L. R. Teal

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THEME SECTIONS of Aquatic Biology (AB) present integrated multi-author syntheses initiated and coordinated by acknowledged experts. They highlight cutting-edge research areas or problems and/or bring together cogent bodies of literature on all aspects of the biology of organisms in freshwater and marine habitats.

AB Theme Section 1 examines the response of bioturbation (mixing of sediment by living organisms) to ecological and environmental changes, by bringing together present-day research on bioturbation with studies of trace fossils (ichnology). Bioturbation studies enable quantification of the behaviour of benthic organisms, of their effect on the environment and their response to environmental change. In sedimentary rocks,

ichnology may be the only means of assessing organisms and ecosystems present before, during and after an ecological shift.

The contributions to AB Theme Section 1 highlight how studies of modern and ancient aquatic environments can inform one another, and illustrate how convergence of these fields will be critical to understanding and predicting effects of future ecological shifts.

As for all current AB articles, we are pleased to make the online version of AB Theme Section 1 available with Open Access.

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