ELSEVIER

Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology 330 (2006) 1 – 2

Journal of EXPERIMENTAL MARINE BIOLOGY AND ECOLOGY

www.elsevier.com/locate/jembe

Preface

Ecology of the benthos: A tribute to Richard M. Warwick

The genesis for this special issue came from a passing hallway conversation with Sandra Shumway who mentioned that Richard Warwick had announced his retirement, after 7 years of service, as one of the Editors-in-Chief of JEMBE. Conversation centered on an appropriate acknowledgment for the devotion Richard provided for enhancing the Journal's reputation and his unwavering support for promoting high quality research articles on the ecology of the benthos. Initial ideas ranged from gifts of bulbs and chocolate from The Netherlands to bottles of wine from the United States, Australia and New Zealand. Recognizing Richard's passion for marine ecology, it seemed far more fitting to pay him tribute by organizing a scientific conference composed of his colleagues, former students and long-standing admirers and inviting Richard to give the keynote address. The idea received overwhelming support from colleagues around the world and the conference honoring Richard was held in association with the Benthic Ecology Meeting in Williamsburg, VA, April 6–10, 2005. A total of 23 oral and 9 poster presentations were given at the conference.

The 32 research articles presented here reflect the breadth of Richard's research interests and cover four broadly defined themes. The first six articles focus on ways of studying the structural attributes of benthic systems starting with Warwick et al. who discuss how infaunal assembly structure varies with sieve and sample size and sample dispersion. The article is followed by Gray et al. who contrast species abundance distributions in marine and terrestrial systems, and Committo et al. and Jackson et al. who examine hierarchical spatial structure in mussel beds and seagrass beds, respectively. Clarke et al. present an approach for a practical classification of various types of resemblance measured commonly used by benthic ecologists, while Walter and Coen compare the usefulness of different statistical approaches for discerning taxonomic compositional changes in natural and constructed oyster reef habitats. The second group of 15 contributions includes a variety of experimental studies on benthic population and community dynamics. A number of contributions in this theme examine the role of different types abiotic disturbances; including organic enrichment and hypoxia (Austin et al., Posey et al. and Montagna and Ritter) to methane seeps and carbon dioxide sequestration in deep-sea communities (Levin et al. and Thistle et al.). Other disturbance studies assess the role of predators and bio-engineers on population and community dynamics (Quijon and Snelgrove, Volenborn and Reise, and Fleeger et al.) and how difference scales of disturbance influence community recovery (Norrko et al.). Junkins et al. present information on different dispersal mechanisms used by oligochaetes for recolonization following disturbances. Two contributions discuss the use of artificial substrates to examine patterns of early community development (Underwood and Chapman) and geographical variations in species diversity patterns (Gobin and Warwick). Angel et al. examine abiotic and biotic mechanisms influencing the abundance and distribution of the most endangered marine mollusc in South Africa. The last two articles in this theme examine trophic linkages; one on benthic–pelagic coupling (Hewitt et al.) and one on the degree of trophic coupling between meio- and macrofauna (Feller). The third theme contains seven contributions which use the benthos to explore broad-scale patterns of species diversity and community structure in high latitude (Somerfield et al. and Renaud et al.), continental shelf (Hyland et al.) and deep-sea habitats (Baguley et al. and Grove et al.). In addition, Hastie and Smith compare differences in benthic community structure found in Australian estuaries which are intermittently closed to those that are permanently open, while Quintino et al. compare different macrobenthic indicators commonly used to assess habitat quality in a number of systems along the coast of Portugal. The last theme contains three essays–

0022-0981/$ - see front matter © 2006 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.
doi:10.1016/j.jembe.2005.12.011

one examining broad-scale patterns of benthic succession in the Baltic (Bonsdorff), one using a new approach to assess cross-system characterizations of the role of the benthos in coastal seas and estuaries (Tenore et al.) and one discussing the effects of Pacific walrus as benthic bioturbators (Ray et al.)–and a comprehensive review by Heck and Valentine detailing the importance of plant–herbivore interactions in structuring seagrass systems.

The 2005 Benthic Ecology Meeting was organized by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, and I am very grateful to the co-hosts of the meeting, Rom Lipcius and Rochelle Seitz, for their support and making the conference a success. I also want to thank all the authors of the special volume for their overwhelming support, adhering to relatively tight schedules for manuscript submissions, and their provocative contributions. I sincerely appreciate the time and effort of more than 60 referees drawn from the international scientific community who read and evaluated each of the contributions. Sandra Shumway was exceedingly supportive in helping to organize the conference and provided enthusiasm, guidance and much needed refreshments during the assembly of this volume. Christiane Barranguet, Elsevier Science Publishers, also provided unbridled support from the very early stages of the conference and for this special volume honoring Richard. It has been a pleasure to help facilitate the conference and bring together the articles contained in this volume. Richard's contributions to the field of marine benthic ecology have always been a source of professional stimulation and often have provoked me to state—"...wasn't that a clever idea, wish I had thought of that one".

Guest editor
Robert B. Whitlatch
Department of Marine Sciences,
University of Connecticut,
1080 Shennecossett Road, Groton, CT 06340, USA
E-mail address: whitlatch@uconn.edu.
Tel.: +1 860 405 9154;
fax: +1 860 405 9153.

15 December 2005