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Designation:

Description:

The Deep Chlorophyll Maxima (DCM) is likely the most relevant oceanic biological structure of the upper ocean. The combination of opposite vertical gradients of light and nutrients, generate a highly stratified ecosystem in which important changes in environmental conditions are present in relatively small spaces, generating a variety of niches for protists and prokaryotes. While phytoplankton are known to position themselves at varying levels in this oceanic structure, much less is known about prokaryotes and other protists. We investigated the fine distribution of microbial groups across the DCM in open waters of the Mediterranean (in early fall 2017) and the Atlantic Ocean (in March 2019). We inspected several sources of variability, including the day/night cycle, and the size-fraction analyzed (0.2-3, 3-20 and 20-200 µm), implying different cell sizes or free-living versus particleattached lifestyles. We took between 5 and 7 samples across a 50 m DCM (plus at least two additional samples above and below the structure). Amplicon sequence variants of the 16S- and 18S-rRNA gene were compared to nutrient concentrations, light penetration, microbial abundance and heterotrophic activity across the DCMs. We classified the microbes according to whether they dominate at the surface and persist or not at the DCM, produce one or two different peaks at the DCM, or appear below the DCM and also/or not further down, and also explore the connectivity across the DCM for the various microbial groups. Our data offer insight into niche differentiation in the pelagic across small spatial scales.

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FINE-SCALE STRUCTURING OF MICROBIAL POPULATIONS ACROSS THE DEEP CHLOROPHYLL MAXIMA LAYERS IN THE NW MEDITERRANEAN AND CENTRAL ATLANTIC

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