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Ocean Science Discussions

Interactive comment on "Reality checks on microbial food web interactions in dilution experiments: Responses to the comments of Dolan and McKeon" *by* M. R. Landry and A. Calbet

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In my opinion the authors have a "right of reply" following the comments of Dolan and McKeon, which has now moved on to full publication in Ocean Science. Therefore, after some revision, I am in favour of publication in Ocean Science. It is also to be hoped that this will enhance the substantive discussion about the application of the dilution method (and necessary ancillary measurements); all parties to the Ocean Science Discussions agree that there should be more debate!

I ask the authors please to embody in a revised text, their own discussion/response to the other discussants/reviewer.

For my reading, the manuscript is rather too cryptic and hence obscure in places, es-

pecially the abstract; poorly-referred or missing pronouns introduce ambiguities which cause the reader to need prior knowledge or work hard to discern which meaning is intended.

In particular: Abstract lines 1 - 3: is the “dilution approach” or the “criticism” “based on ...”? “assuming...”? Line 4: “these conclusions” - does this refer to the “dilution approach” or the “criticism”?

Section 2 General Premise, 1st paragraph, 2nd line up “disproportionately represented” - over-represented or under-represented? 2nd paragraph - a diagram or formula basis would help to understand the implicit calculation deriving 33-40%. Likewise end of 3rd paragraph and 4th paragraph.

Section 3 Methodological Issues ..., 2nd paragraph, last sentence. “transform ... by enhancing...” or “exaggerate ... by enhancing...”?.

Section 4 Ciliates ..., paragraph 1, 3rd line form end “their predatory size range”. Replace their by the real noun - heterotrophic flagellates? Paragraph 2, 2nd line “...acceptability” where? 4th line “opposite” - does this mean unacceptability. Lines 7, 9: “These are...”, “They are...”. What is referred to?

Obviously there also needs to be clarification of the point on flagellate dilution dynamics if “the latest Dolan comment misinterprets ...(it)... as being about their clearance rates”.

The authors should re-word these particular examples, for the version eventually appearing in Ocean Science to be more easily understood.

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Interactive Comment