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Interactive comment on “Spring-time zooplankton size structure over the continental shelf of the Bay of Biscay” by P. Vandromme et al.

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Dear Mr. Vandromme,

You present here a useful and data-rich paper with relevant information on a poorly explored field of the Zooplankton (size distribution) in the Bay of Biscay. The manuscript presents some nice data but the message you are trying to convey gets rather lost. Looking at the paper in general, the biggest problem I found is that at first it seems the main objective of the paper is to describe the size structure of zooplankton in the Bay of Biscay (and there's much useful data for that), but on the other hand results are presented as it would be a methodological study i.e. describing the size-measurement analysis method, even more extendedly than presenting and explaining the main results themselves. The abstract is well written and summarises the study appropriately.

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The Introduction needs some major changes particularly regarding the ordering of the ideas and paragraphs, but in general is ok. However, then you present a very extended Materials&Methods section (maybe too extended), which contrasts with a bit weak interpretation of results (regarding the size distribution of zooplankton). Further, in the Result section some aspects of the M&M are repeated again. Another aspect I would like to remark is the lack of references in the Discussion section. There are many statements you should treat with caution since are presented with no citation. Much more references are needed here. The other major issue is the writing style, which in its current form seems more akin to a report and definitely could be improved to get across the message in a clear and succinct way. I think the manuscript should be effectively shortened and simplified: (1) Many ideas are repeated in different paragraphs and moreover in different sections (e.g. Materials&Methods and Discussion, tables and main text. . .). (2) Some data are repeated during the ms. E.g. “816samples in this study” was indicated 5 times in this MS: in the abstract, M&M text, Table 1 legend, Table1 and Results. (3) Some paragraphs are too long and give no relevant information for your final results. (4) Write short sentences with clear ideas in each (i.e. no 2-3 ideas in the same sentence, that often leads to confusion). (5) Use references instead of explaining everything you’ve read (remember this is an article not a report). (6) Order the main ideas. For example, in M&M section it’s ok to give detailed information about the methodology for the analysis, but in my opinion there’s too much information about stepwise RDA, PLS regression, etc. but you don’t explain why you use one method and not other (giving references), e.g. why you use that grid-resolution for climatological maps, etc. Moreover you add some information in this sense in the Discussion. I think that this study is not for extending/modifying the RDA methodology (or to develop a concrete statistical analysis) but mainly to present information about zooplankton size distribution. Just mention which analysis you use and justify that giving references in the M&M, and discuss your results (i.e. about the zooplankton size distribution) extendedly afterwards (same comment as above). (7) The use of English should be revised carefully. I know 7 co-authors suppose a difficult task in this sense,

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but I was little surprised you did not noticed about some aspects, e.g. repeated ideas (in different sections), paragraphs very similar in both M&M and Discussion, grammatical errors -different use of time&person in the same paragraph and even in the same sentence!-, words in French, different writing styles used depending on the section, etc. I would also suggest not to use terms like “we’ve studied/presented” but “. . .have been presented/were used. . .”, etc. I made some corrections in the Introduction and M&M (until p.2216) sections, but did not in Results and Discussion sections, please check.

In any case the analysis and illustrations are generally ok and results presented are of special interest for further research in both zooplankton ecology and trophic ecology of potential predators (e.g. small pelagic species). Hence, I would recommend its publication but only after making some major changes, most regarding the writing style/presentation of results.

I spent much effort and time trying to give detailed comments and changes in the ms, which are attached in the revised pdf version (I suggest you to open it with Adobe Acrobat). I hope you will find them helpful to improve the manuscript; also, it is my firm belief that the presentation can be effectively modified regarding the writing style of the manuscript. I would also suggest the English to be reviewed by a native speaker once all the changes have been made.

Best wishes,

Eneko Bachiller

Please also note the supplement to this comment:

<http://www.ocean-sci-discuss.net/10/C818/2014/osd-10-C818-2014-supplement.pdf>

Interactive comment on Ocean Sci. Discuss., 10, 2207, 2013.

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