

The contribution of benthic macrofauna to the nutrient filter in coastal lagoons



"Human activities in coastal areas have increased the occurrence of eutrophication events, especially in vulnerable ecosystems such as coastal lagoons. Although we have a general knowledge of the consequences of eutrophication in these ecosystems, some efforts need to be made to understand biotic feedbacks that could modify the response of the environment to nutrient enrichment.

The plant-mediated 'coastal filter' is one of the main factors that determine lagoonal efficiency in processing excess nutrients. In this context, the present paper examined the relative contribution of benthic macrofauna to the 'coastal filter' of a Mediterranean lagoon.

The analysis of macrofaunal assemblages in the Mar Menor lagoon led to a clear differentiation between shallow areas of net nutrient recycling and exportation and deeper areas of net retention. These differences enhance nutrient removal from the water column, thus increasing the ecosystem's resistance to eutrophication."

Auteurs du document : LLORET J., MARIN A.

Obtenir le document : Departamento de Ecología e Hidrología, Universidad de Murcia, Spain

Mots clés : MACROFAUNE BENTHIQUE, EUTROPHISATION, ESPAGNE

Thème (issu du Text Mining) : MILIEU NATUREL

Date : 2011

Type de ressource : Article scientifique

Format : text/xml

Identifiant Documentaire : PRLM5983

Langue : Anglais

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