

Enclosed are the author's response to the fourth reviewing process (the associate Editor initial decision) on the manuscript entitled "Microbial colonisation in diverse surface soil types in Surtsey and diversity analysis of its subsurface microbiota".

The authors are most thankful for the final comments on the paper given by the associate Editor. Enclosed, we have addressed his comments and questions by detailed point-by-point response.

Associate Editor: P.2, lines: 60 - 62. --> .. in June 1967. In 1979 a 181 m deep hole was drilled to investigate.... (one sentence --> two sentences)

Author's response: This has been addressed as suggested: One sentence has been divided into two: page 2, .line 61. „.....flow in June 1967. In 1979 a 181 m deep hole was drilled to investigate.....”

Associate Editor: P.25. Fig 4. I suggest you erase all numbers on the fig., just leave the SJ, SR and SS labels. Then in the figure text you can include SR 1-12 and SR 15-17 in brackets, where they belong in the red and purple.(The figure looks much better now than in the previous version, with all the labels included)

Author's response: This has been addressed as suggested: The numbers on figure 4 has been omitted and the numbers are now included in the figure text as following: page 24, “Figure 4. Non-metric multidimensional scaling, Euclidean distances. Environmental parameters included in analysis: temperature, total carbon, total nitrogen, water content, total microbial count on PCA and counts of *Enterobacteriaceae*. SS samples (3-10) in light green (sand or pumice with bird droppings), SJ samples (1-7 & 10-15) in dark green (pure sand or pumice) and SR (1-12) samples in red (partly vegetated and none vegetated area) and SR (15-17) in purple (vegetated).

Associate Editor: P.26. Fig.5. In the fig. text change the first two sentence to --> Temperature at 5 m interval along the drill hole, from the surface to the bottom at 178 m.

Author's response: The text in Figure 5 has been change as suggested by following: Page 25, Figure 5. “Figure 5. Temperatures at 5 m interval along the drill hole, from the surface down to the bottom at 178 m. The circles show the depth and temperature of the SB samples.”

Associate Editor: P.32, Table 2. In the last column heading: Vegetation --> Vegetation cover

Author's response: This has been addressed as suggested: The word “cover” has been added to the last column, page 30.

Additionally changment: Figure 1. We noticed that SR7 and SR2 were positioned wrongly. SR2 should be where SR7 is and vice versa. This has been changed in the figure 1. Also we have moved SR 17 up closer to SR 16 which is more accurate.