

Review of 'Alpha and beta diversity patterns of polychaete assemblages across the nodule province of the eastern Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone (Equatorial Pacific)'  
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The manuscript is greatly improved on revision. The main findings, that almost half the polychaete species sampled in the nodule zone, of the Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone, were only represented by a single individual and only a single species was common to all five areas need to be widely reported.

It is still not entirely clear what happened to nodule-associated polychaetes. Epifauna visible on the surface were picked off before washing and sessile polychaetes still on the nodules after washing were later removed. It appears that these were not included in the dataset but what was their percentage contribution to the total polychaete numbers. In addition it would be useful to know if the nodules were preserved for later dissection to extract their polychaete infauna. I think that it is important to give an indication of what fraction of the polychaete fauna is included in this paper.

Infauna are important in nutrient recycling and deeper-burrowing infauna are particularly important. While appreciating the difficulties in sampling these, the rare observations on them, such as the maldanid found at 50 cm depth, should be mentioned to show how little we know about the deeper abyssal infauna. In addition any observations on deep burrows would be of interest.

Table 1 lists the data for all the box core stations. The only actual result listed in the table is the "nodules density", actually the nodule wet weight, extrapolated to the weight per  $m^{-2}$ . Firstly this is not the density and secondly all the biological data is recorded per box core area, i.e. in  $0.25 m^{-2}$ . The table should include the basic polychaete data per box core, i.e. total numbers and number of "species" so that readers can follow the author's analysis rather than having to extract the individual core data from the database in PANGEA.

The authors recognise that the estimated number of polychaete species and the average species range in the nodule province of the CCFZ are not well constrained as a result of the limited sampling possible on this cruise. It would therefore be helpful if the authors could discuss what sampling effort might be required to obtain reasonable estimates of these.