

Interactive comment on “Adult life strategy affects distribution patterns in abyssal isopods – implications for conservation in Pacific nodule areas” by Saskia Brix et al.

Anonymous Referee #1

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General comments: This manuscript discusses an important problem in deep-sea benthic science: how widely are the species spread – and not least: how can we know that we have sampled enough to cover a species? By using isopod-data from the CCZ (and the DISCOL-area as a “control”) and combining it with knowledge about the different life (and distribution) strategies for various taxa the authors present their suggestion for a method. The manuscript is generally well written (though sometimes it is a bit “massive”) and is based on a large and sound dataset.

Specific comments: I think the manuscript starts out really well, and all analyses are sound and well reasoned. The discussion is also interesting (though sometimes you

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bring in a plethora of ideas and thoughts at the same time, so even when it is structured, it feels a bit unstructured), and then the conclusion is about something slightly off (but still important) than what you start out with. You start out with wanting to examine the distribution patterns based on life strategy (as your title also claims), and you conclude with the problem we face when we need to delimit between species, and there is an astonishing (impressive!) high number of species possibly new to science in your dataset. I do understand that it is difficult to answer the original question precisely when you work with such a high percentage of “unknowns” – and I appreciate your efforts to make a try anyway. But maybe you need to include this question (about the taxonomic impediment) in your scope? Or discuss it a bit before?

Technical correctios: I attach an annotated version of your manuscript where I have suggested some corrections and pointed out a few minor errors. In general, I think there is a lot of information being “bombarded” on the reader, and thus the manuscript becomes heavy and a bit difficult to read. I understand that this is necessary if you want to discuss all the things you discuss, and it is also the style of the journal? But helping the readers follow your data and following arguments makes for better understanding...

Please also note the supplement to this comment:

<https://www.biogeosciences-discuss.net/bg-2019-358/bg-2019-358-RC1-supplement.pdf>

Interactive comment on Biogeosciences Discuss., <https://doi.org/10.5194/bg-2019-358>, 2019.

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