Influence of Oxygen Minimum Zone on Macrobenthic Community Structure in the Northern Benguela Upwelling System; A Macro-Nematode Perspective

Response to the Editor's comments

Thank you for the corrections. Based on the line numbers, I deduced that these corrections were made from the Author's track changes (ATC) file. Some of the corrections were already made in the clean copy but I will still mention them in this document, however, the line numbering will be based on the last clear manuscript (version 3).

Please note that after I stopped the tracking changes and had the clean manuscript, I made some small changes to the manuscript like commas, and slight changes in words to enhance the clarity of the manuscript, thus the final manuscript version might have more corrections compared to the ATC file

Serial No	Section	Reviewer 1 Corrections	Authors corrections
	Abstract	Do not capitalize Macrobenthic on line 20 or Diversity on line 25 (both are mid sentence)	Both 'macrobenthic' and 'diversity' have been corrected. Refer to lines 20 and 25 respectively.
1.0	**Introduction**	Line 96 – macrobenthis that are 2 to 0.5 mm are not large enough to be seen with the naked eye! That definition is for megafauna.	This statement has been corrected to read "benthic organisms that are typically retained in a 0.5 mm sieve but pass through a 2.00 mm sieve" (Line 73-74)
		Line 99 – The citation Gibson & Atkinson, 2003 should be Levin, Lisa A. 2003. (Gibson and Atkinson are the OMBAR editors for all the volumes in all the years!).	The citation has been corrected and the in-text reference '(Levin, 2003) was adopted as this has been in use throughout the manuscript. (Line-63 & 76)

		Line 113 – CHANGE Spinoid, Dorvilleid, and Lumbrinerid to the family names Spionidae, Dorvilleidae and Lumbrineridae.	Corrections have been made to the polychaete families (Line 80)
		Line 123 change reducing latitude to lower latitude	'Reducing' has been changed with 'lower'. Line 95
2.2	**Sample Collection**	Line 154 Please indicate in this sentence if these are distances from shore – or if not, distances from what? The sampling stations were located at 02 nm, 20 nm, 40 nm, or 70 nm at each transect, with the 26º S transect hosting only one station at 90 nm (Figure 1).	The word 'from the shore' has been added in L**ine 123**.
2.3	**Laboratory Analysis**	Line 174 add 'for macrofauna' after (300-500 microns).	The correction has been made and the statement reads "This size, although slightly smaller, falls within the range of commonly used sieve sizes (300 to 500 microns) for macrofaunal research." Refer to Line 141.
		Line 193. Add 'They are before further subdivided…	'they are' has been added as requested. See Line 154.
		Line 197 – do not capitalize Selective	The letter 's' has been corrected as requested. (Line 158).
		Line 206 remove the second 'then'	The first 'then' has been removed (Line 167)
2.4	**Data analysis**	Give the log scale for H' e.g., H'log10 or H'loge	Further information on the calculation of the diversity indices

		Explain what metric dominance is … rank 1 dominance? (or J'?)	has been added in section '2.4 Data Analysis'. Refer to lines 190-191.
3.1	**Abiotic Factors**	Line 278, 282 Do not use zeros for degree sign	The degree symbol has been corrected throughout the manuscript. See lines 207, 209, and 211.
3.2	**Macrobenthic Appendages**	Line 291 Replace contrastingly with in contrast	'Contrastingly' has been replaced with 'in contrast'. Refer to line 235.
		Line 330 and 544 replace taxa with taxon	Taxa has been replaced by 'taxon' in Line 225.
		Line 276 Superscript the -1 in ml l-1 Line 291 and 293 and 331, 335 etc. – superscript the -2 on m-2.	Superscripts have been inserted in the instances mentioned.
3.3	**Macro-nematodes density and diversity**	Line 467 do not capitalize Diversity	Diversity has been written in small letters. (Line 292).
4.0	**Discussion**	Line 500 Change groupings to grouping	The cleaner version was reading 'grouping', so no further action was taken. (Line 304)
		Line 509 to 512. This is redundant to the previous sentence. Rephrase to say It is essential to note that numerically Polychaeta was the most abundant in this oxygen zone, RELATIVE TO OTHER ZONES, but the presence of MANY INDIVIDUALS OF other taxa in the MICROXIC stations reduced	The suggestions of the editor were adopted, however, the term 'relative to other zones' was not included because it meant that Polychaeta was numerically more abundant than in the microxic zone compared to other zones which was not the case.

		their PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION. . OMIT _ the text - Here, relative abundance refers to the proportion of 509 polychaetes to the total number of organisms in the same area. Therefore, even though polychaetes 510 were numerically abundant, the diversity of other taxa present reduced their share of the total 511 population, hence the low relative abundance.	The statement now reads "It is essential to note that numerically Polychaeta was the most abundant taxon in this oxygen zone, but the presence of many individuals of other taxa in microxic stations reduced their proportional representation." Lines 312-314.
		Line 513 – indicate if the OMZ core is comparable to the microxic zone in your study	The OMZ core's comparison with our study has been included. Refer to Line 314
		Line 520 – change quantities to concentrations	'Quantities' has been changed to 'concentrations'. Refer to line 322
		Line 534 and 539– remove parentheses from around station number	Parentheses have been removed. Refer to Lines 325-343.
		Line 540 use the same nomenclature for individuals per square metre, (ind. m-2) throughout the paper	The nomenclature has been harmonized to ind. m^{-2}. Refer to line 342.
		Line 581 Change alluded to suggested	The term 'suggested' replaced 'change'. Line 364
		Line 629 – Hyphenate species specific	The hyphen had been inserted in the clear copy. No further action was taken. Refer to Line 396.
		Line 688 insert a semicolon after taxa and before most genera	The semicolon was already inserted in the clear copy. No

			further action was taken. Refer to Line 429.
		Line 718-9 Italicize the three genera of bacteria.	The genera have been italicized. Refer to line 443-445.
		Line 732 insert space after (2B)	Space has been inserted after (2B)
5.0	**Conclusion**	Line 776 is there a missing word? What does 'co' represent? Counterparts?	Yes, the 'co' was supposed to be counterparts. Line 478
	Table & Figures	Line 813 Table 1. change heading below Station from Replicate to No. Replicates	'No. Replicates has been added on the 2nd column.
		Figure 2 caption. Explain what the error bars are – +1 SD? +1 SE?	Error bars has been explained at the end of the caption.
		Figure 3 and 6 caption. Do not capitalize relative.	The 'r' in relative has been written in lowercase.
		Figure 5 and Figure 8 caption. Give the log base of H'. Explain which dominance metric is used here – is this J'? Rank 1 Dominance? Explain what the error bars are. + 1 SD? + 1SE?	H' diversity, dominance, and error bars have been explained in these figures
		Fig. 6 legend. Are you able to italicize the genera?	Yes, The genera have been italicized.
		Figure 7 Add (1953) after Wieser	(1953) has been added to the figure caption.
		Acknowledgements. Line 2 remove extra (,	The extra (has been removed.

		Consider thanking the (anonymous) reviewers for input?	The reviewers' inputs have been acknowledged.
	References	Gibson, R. N., & Atkinson, R. J. A. (2003). Oxygen minimum zone benthos: adaptation and community response to hypoxia. Oceanogr. Marine Biol. Annu. Rev, 41, 1–45. Should be cited as: Levin, Lisa A. (2003). Oxygen minimum zone benthos: adaptation and community response to hypoxia. Oceanogr. Marine Biol. Annu. Rev, 41, 1–45.	The reference 'Levin, Lisa A. (2003). Oxygen minimum zone benthos: adaptation and community response to hypoxia. Oceanogr. Marine Biol. Annu. Rev, 41, 1–45' was already on the reference list as 'Levin Lisa. (2003). Oxygen minimum zone benthos: Adaptation and community response to hypoxia. In Gibson R. N & Atkinson R.J.A (Eds.), Oceanography and Marine Biology: An Annual Review (Vol. 41, pp. 1–45). CRC Press.'