



1 ***Ideas and Perspectives:***

2 **Value and efficiency of ocean sample return and laboratory analysis:**

3 **Key analytes are orders of magnitude rarer than a needle in a**

4 **haystack**

5

6 *Mak A. Saito^{*1}, Matthew R. McIlvin¹, Annette F. Govindarajan², John A. Breier³*

7 *¹Marine Chemistry and Geochemistry Department, Woods Hole Oceanographic*

8 *Institution, Woods Hole MA 02543*

9 *² Biology Department, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Woods Hole MA 02543*

10 *³ Applied Ocean Physics and Engineering Department, Woods Hole Oceanographic*

11 *Institution, Woods Hole MA 02543*

12

13

14 **Corresponding author, msaito@whoi.edu*

15

16

17

18

19

20

21



22 **Abstract**

23 There is a pressing need to understand how the oceans are responding to human perturbations,
24 yet their vastness poses a considerable challenge. The development and deployment of
25 biologically and ecologically relevant in situ sensors are frequently invoked as a means to
26 improve this understanding; however, there are still relatively few sensors for these parameters
27 due to the analytical challenges involved in their measurement. Specifically, many analytes of
28 interest are orders of magnitude rarer by mass than a needle in a haystack (e.g., dissolved iron
29 and eDNA are 10^4 to 10^8 times rarer), and this scarcity creates challenges involving
30 preconcentration, interfering elements or compounds, and analytical methods difficult to perform
31 underwater. While sensor development is important, the role of sample collection and return is
32 also an important, yet oft overlooked, complement for studying ocean change and is ripe for
33 additional development. Laboratory analyses of returned samples can be high throughput for
34 challenging analytes like micronutrients and omics parameters, and these techniques are
35 operational now. Moreover, sample return allows parallel analyses and archiving through
36 splitting of sample material. Similar to human health diagnostics, laboratory analyses can
37 provide ocean health diagnostic capabilities showing how ecosystems are responding,
38 complementing sensor-based vital sign measurements indicating environmental change.
39 Together, these properties make sample collection and return a critical component for achieving
40 the global ocean coverage needed to capture the environmental changes well underway today,
41 and this approach should continue to be factored into ocean observing strategies.

42

43 ***Introduction: Is a goal of robust sensors for all ocean parameters feasible?***

44 Throughout the history of ocean science, our understanding has been shaped by a combination
45 of observations made in situ (underwater) or by discrete samples that are analyzed at sea or
46 returned to home laboratories. Ship-based sampling can include a variety of wire-based
47 deployments (e.g., CTDs) and flow-through seawater systems, and other platforms take many
48 forms including coastal monitoring stations, floating moorings tethered to the seafloor, and
49 remotely operated and autonomous robotic vehicles. With the emergence of underwater and
50 autonomous platforms there has been keen interest in the development of robust in situ sensors
51 for key environmental parameters. By robust sensors we refer to devices that can routinely be
52 deployed underwater including those that can be remotely deployed for months to years without
53 maintenance or replenishment of reagents. Due to this interest, there has been an implicit, and



54 more recently explicit, expectation that the development of new robust sensors for any and all
55 parameters of interest is both imminent and inevitable.

56 Yet the emergence of reliable low-cost sensors for the majority of biological and chemical
57 parameters has not matched the pace of platform development. Why have expectations and
58 reality diverged? And what are the resulting implications when Earth observations are critical in
59 a time of rapid environmental change? Here we discuss the disconnect between the assumption
60 of 'imminent and inevitable' biological and chemical sensor development with the reality of
61 analytical chemistry challenges, and we make the case for appreciating the value of 'less
62 exciting' sample return strategies in ocean research programs.

63 ***The challenges of in situ analysis for scarce and complex analytes***

64 One can understand how the aspirational idea that any property of interest should be
65 measurable by a sensor might arise. The robustness of now-ubiquitous oceanographic sensors
66 for temperature, pressure, salinity, oxygen, and fluorescence has transformed the field of
67 oceanography over recent decades. Their impact is demonstrated by the fact that the main
68 shipboard instrument, the CTD water sampling rosette, is commonly referred to simply by the
69 abbreviation of its three key sensors: conductivity (from which salinity is derived), temperature,
70 and depth (derived from pressure): the "CTD". The sensors on rosettes operate without
71 reagents, can operate to full ocean depths, and are robust for months to years, only needing
72 periodic recalibrations.

73 There have been important efforts to develop in situ analytical systems for parameters beyond
74 these examples, including complex biological and chemical parameters (Aguiar et al., 2023;
75 Grand et al., 2016; Geißler et al., 2021; Hurst et al., 2010; Johnson and Coletti, 2002; Ma et al.,
76 2016; Pierrot et al., 2009; Vuillemin et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2015; Zeng et al., 2003). Notably,
77 there are also instances of new automated shipboard systems for analytes such as inorganic
78 carbonate parameters (e.g., pCO₂) and flow cytometers for microbial cell abundances (in situ
79 and shipboard: Olson et al., 2003; Swallow et al., 2011). Finally, there are also capabilities for
80 mooring and AUV-based in situ DNA analysis using DNA-specific probes and quantitative
81 polymerase chain reaction methodology (qPCR; Scholin et al., 2009; Scholin et al., 2017;
82 Yamahara et al., 2019). These are some recent examples of technological implementations of
83 difficult analytical measurements underwater or at sea (e.g., shipboard DNA sequencing).
84 These technologies are capable of conducting in situ analyses with high temporal resolution and



85 provide valuable new research insights and public health information (e.g., harmful algal bloom
86 dynamics). Yet in most cases, these newer systems also require complex instrumentation
87 and/or perishable reagents and hence are usually distinct from CTD sensors that are robust for
88 long deployments. Due to reagent replenishment, instrument durability, power needs, or cost,
89 many of these devices may not yet be compatible with being integrated into long-term
90 oceanographic systems such as floats and offshore moorings or with application at global
91 scales. And in many cases, these instruments are in fact collecting and processing samples in
92 situ: performing separation, chemical preprocessing, analysis, and archival storage, with the
93 advantage of gaining the final data sooner than returning the sample for shore-based analysis.
94 Yet, there are trade-offs in utilizing in situ analysis, where results are often more limited in
95 scientific scope, generally focusing on a single parameter or method per instrument, compared
96 to what is possible by applying multi-analyte laboratory workflows to returned samples. For
97 example, in situ qPCR only detects specific predetermined DNA sequence targets, limiting
98 analysis to targets chosen prior to the assay. In contrast, widely used sequencing-based
99 approaches such as metabarcoding, metagenomics, and metatranscriptomics, which operate on
100 returned samples, can broadly survey the nucleic acid assemblage.

101 Given the rapid pace of technological development, one might assume an inevitable expansion
102 of the CTD to a “CTD-CNPFDPMV” system (carbon, nitrogen, phosphate, iron, DNA, protein,
103 metabolites, vitamins, etc.). With a few exceptions, this has largely not happened (Johnson et
104 al., 2017a; Johnson et al., 2017b; Wang et al., 2019). The nitrate sensor is one example of
105 successful sensor development of a key biogeochemical parameter that overcame potential
106 interference from bromide (Johnson and Coletti, 2002), yet still faces detection limit challenges
107 in low-level oceanic environments. The promise of a broad array of robust and sensitive
108 biological and chemical sensors that replace laboratory capabilities remains largely unfulfilled.
109 Why? Aside from the unique engineering challenges that confront measurements in the ocean
110 environment, there are fundamental chemical challenges to the development of sensors.
111 Primary among these is the low concentration of many analytes of interest within a complex
112 matrix of interferences (Table S2).

113 To demonstrate this, we can look at the salinity sensor, which is considered by many to be an
114 ideal chemical sensor of seawater given its durability and precision and thus one that other
115 chemical sensors might aim to replicate in its simplicity. It is in fact an electrical sensor that
116 measures aqueous conductivity generated by the abundance and activities of major cations and
117 anions in seawater, in particular sodium and chloride, as well as some lesser contributors



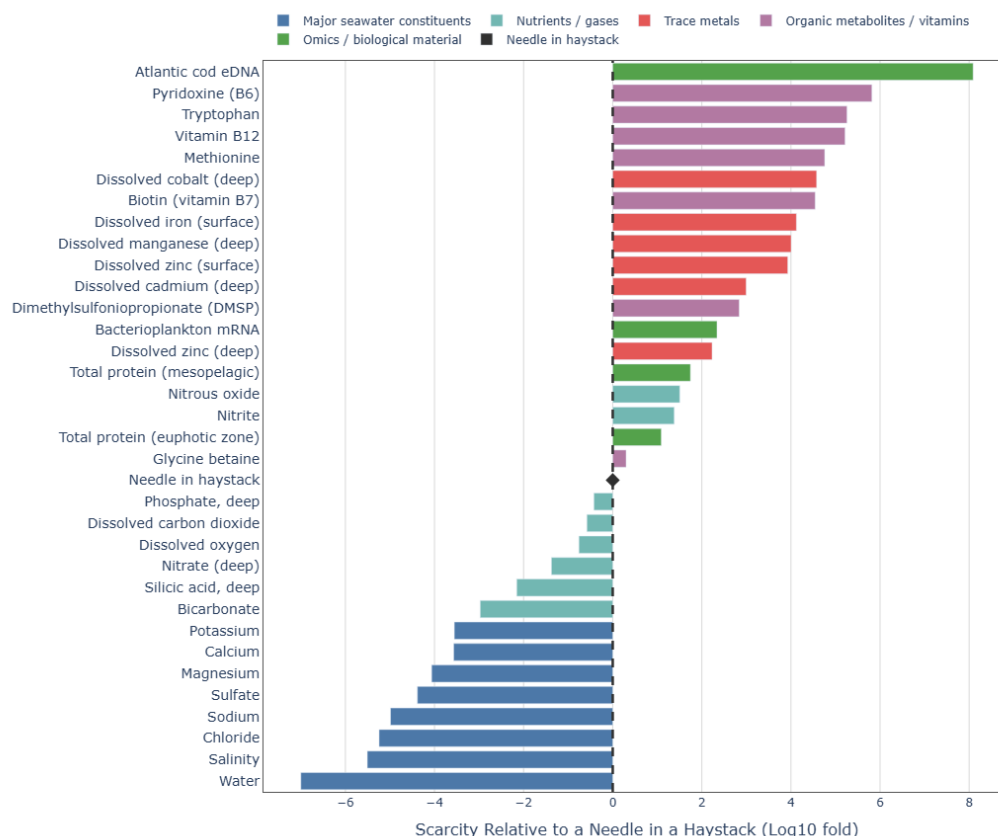
118 (sulfate, potassium, magnesium, and calcium)(Jacobson, 1950; Gregg and Cox, 1971; Gregg
 119 and Cox, 1972). The abundances of sodium and chloride are very high at $\sim 0.5 \text{ mol L}^{-1}$ each,
 120 and the other major salts are approximately tenfold lower than that. Together these charged
 121 ions create an electrical conductivity that solid-state sensors can measure precisely, and from
 122 which salinity is then calculated. Oceanographic processes that vary the salinity content in
 123 seawater, such as freshwater inputs and evaporation, cause variations in seawater salinity that
 124 are imprinted onto the long timescales of ocean mixing. While salinity is an essential parameter
 125 in the study of ocean circulation, the variations in salt chemical composition are not themselves
 126 major influences on ocean biogeochemical processes, with the ratio of major salts being a
 127 conservative property that is relatively invariant throughout much of the ocean. It is worth
 128 mentioning that even for this ubiquitous measurement, laboratory-based instrument calibrations
 129 are still necessary to detect small changes in salinity attributed to climate change (Castagno et
 130 al., 2019).

131 In contrast to salinity's role in tracing physical processes, the nutrients and micronutrients in
 132 seawater have a major influence on ocean biogeochemical processes, including the marine
 133 carbon cycle, and hence are desired biogeochemical analytes. For example, iron directly
 134 controls the photosynthetic productivity of a third of the surface ocean, and up to 70% of
 135 productivity when its limitation of nitrogen fixation is included (Moore et al., 2004). Its dissolved
 136 concentration ranges are often sub-nanomolar, for example as low as $0.15 \pm 0.08 \text{ nM}$ ($n = 141$)
 137 in the Pacific Sector of Antarctica, an iron-limited region (Tagliabue et al., 2012). This is more
 138 than nine orders of magnitude lower in abundance than the co-occurring major salts sodium and
 139 chloride.

140 For comparison, we can utilize the English expression "like finding a needle in a haystack",
 141 which was already considered an "old adage" in the 18th century (Rogers, 1779). The
 142 expression refers to something that is near impossible to locate. Using the average weight of
 143 modern metal hand-sewing needles and a literature estimate of a haystack's mass, we can
 144 estimate that the mass of a needle in a haystack is actually $\sim 13,000$ times more abundant than
 145 the dissolved iron in seawater (also by mass; Figures 1 and 2 and Table S1; Supplemental
 146 Methods). Many key vitamins, metabolites, micronutrients, and biomolecules (specific nucleic
 147 acid or protein sequences) can be similarly scarce or even scarcer. For example, eDNA,
 148 referring to environmental DNA including remnants of larger passing organisms (e.g., small
 149 animals and fish), can provide taxon-specific sequences that are rare despite the overall
 150 aggregate (primarily microbial) DNA being more abundant in seawater. In this analogy, salinity



151 sensors are measuring the haystack itself: the salts that provide the signal are the major
 152 chemical constituents of seawater after water itself, contributing ~3% of the weight of seawater.
 153 Finding a steel needle in a haystack might be easier today, as metal needles have
 154 ferromagnetic properties allowing electromagnetic approaches to be employed.



155 **Figure 1.** The scarcity of example analytes in seawater, presented normalized to the challenge
 156 of finding a needle in a haystack (mass-to-mass basis). Analyte list is not exhaustive. See Table
 157 S2 and Supplementary Material for information on calculations and references.

158

159 Despite these 13,000-times-harder-than-a-needle-in-a-haystack challenges, marine chemists
 160 have excelled at measuring iron and other trace metals in seawater thanks to the development
 161 of trace metal clean sampling and analytical methods and extensive intercalibration efforts like
 162 those of the GEOTRACES program. In recent years, GEOTRACES has mapped the distribution
 163 of trace elements on a global scale for the first time (Schlitzer et al., 2018; Anderson et al.,



2020). The methods used include flow injection, atomic absorption, electrochemistry, and inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry approaches. These are methods requiring laboratory expertise, sophisticated instrumentation, and specialized reagents. Some such as flow injection (adapted from microfluidics) and electrochemistry are capable of deployment as in situ analytical systems (Achterberg et al., 1999; Geißler et al., 2017), but generally lack the ability to analyze metals complexed to organic molecules or to filter in situ, and hence capture a subset of the metal inventory compared with ship-based or shore-based methods that can differentiate between dissolved, particulate, labile and complexed, and colloidal fractions of the total metals found in seawater. Moreover, the stability of chemical or enzymatic reagents continues to be a significant challenge for longer underwater deployments. It is also important to recognize that most in situ chemical sensors are single analyte: individual systems would have to be designed and deployed for each parameter (e.g., iron and zinc sensors would have to be separate), rather than as multi-analyte mass spectrometry methods commonly used with samples returned to the laboratory (Jackson et al., 2018). Many analytical methods are also affected by interferences from co-occurring elements. Perhaps because of these challenges, in situ seawater metal analyses are currently rarely used compared to ship-based or land-based laboratory methods.

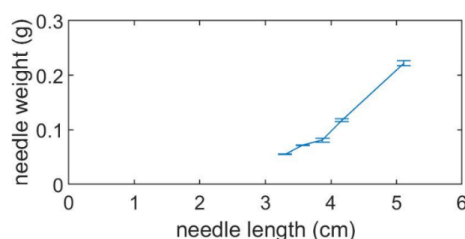


Figure 2. Weight of sewing needles relative to length. Relative standard deviation (RSD) of weights varied from 0.9 to 4.9%. The needle weight used in Figure 1 was the mean across five size classes, reported as 0.1095 ± 0.0020 g (see Supplementary Materials and Table S1).

Similarly, there are numerous biological molecules that are of interest to oceanographers. Chlorophyll and colored dissolved organic matter (CDOM) are highly abundant and have optical properties that allow them to be measured by robust sensors, yet many biomolecules in seawater either don't share these optical properties or aren't as abundant. DNA, RNA, proteins, and metabolites (where a collective 'omics' term refers to deep molecular methods including



194 genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, and metabolomics that measure the respective
 195 biomolecules) are of great interest to researchers for their ability to understand the mechanistic
 196 workings of organisms and ecosystems. Instruments for in situ sensing of DNA have utilized
 197 PCR technology for specific sequences such as those of red tide harmful algal blooms – when
 198 rapid results regarding a known target can be informative for human health issues (Scholin et
 199 al., 2009). But other omics analyses require ship- or shore-based laboratory processing, for
 200 example metabarcoding (amplicon sequencing) and the targets of these analyses are not
 201 necessarily known in advance (e.g., the analyses may be exploratory). Metabarcoding can
 202 capture a wide range of taxonomic targets ranging from microbes to macro and megafauna, and
 203 the concentrations and distributions of their associated nucleic acids may be taxon-specific,
 204 making a “one-size-fits-all” sensor unrealistic. For example, omics data on microbial targets
 205 (where the processed molecules may stem from the organisms themselves) may only require
 206 small collection volumes (Patin and Goodwin, 2023), but animal target detection (based on
 207 fragments shed by organisms of various sizes, DNA shedding properties, population densities,
 208 and distributions) may require much larger volumes (Govindarajan et al., 2022; Herrera et al.,
 209 2026). Similarly, for measurement of proteins there is the potential for adopting antigen assays
 210 for specific proteins, similar to those used in over-the-counter COVID-19 test kits, but significant
 211 investment and testing is needed for each protein target, and many such assays are needed to
 212 capture ocean diversity making the progression to deployment challenging. While these in situ
 213 approaches are technically feasible, they can involve complex instrumentation and regular
 214 upkeep, and often sample a narrow range of biological diversity. Hence these approaches are
 215 often well-suited as key components of coastal monitoring systems or research on specific
 216 questions rather than for global oceanographic diversity and functional biogeochemical studies.

217 **The Emergence and Power of Multi-Analyte Laboratory Analyses**

218 In contrast to the current state of in situ capabilities described above, laboratory capabilities
 219 today far exceed what can be done underwater. There is incredible scientific depth in current
 220 chemical and biomolecular measurements that can be conducted on samples returned to the
 221 laboratory. Samples can be analyzed for many parameters (dozens of elements) or diverse
 222 molecules (hundreds to many tens of thousands or more) within broader parameter classes
 223 (i.e., eDNA, eRNA, proteins, metabolites) simultaneously from splits on each individual sample,
 224 including analytes that were not originally planned (e.g., Gold et al., 2023). Moreover, samples
 225 can be archived for future analyses that can be used to answer new questions or to apply new
 226 approaches, including assays still under development. Publicly accessible archives and data



227 repositories can also make samples and data available to scientists who do not have the
228 resources for their own seagoing expeditions.

229 In recent decades, the capabilities of laboratory technology have become exceptional. Mass
230 spectrometers, nucleotide sequencers, and other instruments are capable of highly sensitive
231 and information-rich analysis of atoms and molecules within complex samples. Mass
232 spectrometers are cornerstones of both inorganic and organic analyses, where they separate
233 molecules or elements from interferences, allowing sensitive and accurate measurements.
234 Improvements in mass spectrometers have also enabled many analytes (hundreds to hundreds
235 of thousands) to be measured on a single sample injection, providing great efficiency and depth
236 to the analyses. While simple field mass spectrometers for dissolved gases exist, most mass
237 spectrometers have attributes that are difficult to adapt and maintain in underwater (and
238 shipboard) environments such as high vacuum and power requirements, gas and solvent use,
239 complex electronics, and sophisticated inlet systems. Similarly, nucleotide sequencing has
240 increased its depth of analysis with successive generations of technology, now providing
241 millions of reads per sample. There are domain cultural differences here that we see play out in
242 rare cross-disciplinary conversations: oceanographers accustomed to a handful of individual
243 sensors providing tens of thousands of data points per cast might consider a vertical profile with
244 20 discrete samples to be greatly lacking. Whereas scientists now generate omics data with
245 millions of valuable data units (base pairs or spectral features) from every discrete bottle or
246 pump depth, each providing a wealth of biological and chemical information.

247 The potential for omic data to contribute diagnostic information to understanding ocean health
248 parallels activities in biomedical fields. The discovery of biomarkers that can diagnose various
249 cancer types based on blood sample analysis has been relatively challenging despite great
250 investment (Hristova et al., 2019; Ren et al., 2020). In contrast, the discovery of biomarkers for
251 nutritional controls on ocean productivity has been rapid and the results robust, exemplifying a
252 valuable contribution of the omics revolution to marine sciences (Chappell et al., 2012; Cohen et
253 al., 2021; Frischkorn et al., 2019; Held et al., 2020; Kellogg et al., 2022; Saito et al., 2014; Saito
254 et al., 2015; Ustick et al., 2021). Biomarkers, represented by proteins, transcripts, or genes, that
255 aid in the acquisition or sparing of key nutrients have been discovered in marine phytoplankton
256 for nitrogen, phosphorus, iron, zinc, and vitamin B₁₂ (Bertrand et al., 2012; Walworth et al., 2022;
257 Kellogg et al., 2022). Moreover, because of the sequence specificity of the genes and proteins
258 being measured, it is possible to discern who is experiencing nutritional stress to precise
259 taxonomic levels (genus, species, or even ecotype level; Saito et al., 2015, Yang et al., 2026).



260 In short, within a single sample, omics measurements can discern who is present, what is
 261 controlling their productivity (e.g., their carbon fixation rates), and even make estimates of their
 262 biogeochemical reaction rates (Saito et al., 2020).

263

264

265

266

267

268

269

270



271 **Figure 3.** The Autonomous Underwater Vehicle Clio, capable of high-throughput full ocean
 272 depth sampling for biological and chemical parameters by use of sample return (Breier et al.,
 273 2020; Photo credit M. Saito).

274 When sampling and return are incorporated into expeditions that traverse ocean basins,
 275 diagnostic maps across space and time can be created, as demonstrated by the WOCE and
 276 GEOTRACES programs, and as one of the field elements planned by the emerging
 277 BioGeoSCAPES program (Saito et al., 2024). New generations of robotic sampling systems
 278 have been developed to enhance collection abilities such as autonomous underwater vehicles
 279 (AUVs) that sample directly (e.g., *Clio*, Jakuba et al., 2018; Breier et al., 2020) or serve as
 280 platforms for autonomous samplers (e.g., *Mesobot*; Yoerger et al., 2021; Govindarajan et al.,
 281 2023, and the LRAUV-ESP; Truelove et al., 2022). Recently even autonomous surface vehicles
 282 (ASVs) with autonomous samplers have been deployed, decoupling oceanographic sampling
 283 from oceanographic cruises (Preston et al., 2023). Deployment of currently available underwater
 284 sensors for a broad range of important analytes cannot match the spatial coverage and depth of
 285 diagnostic capability that high-throughput sampling, return, and analysis can currently
 286 accomplish. *Clio*, for example, is a full-depth (6000 m) fully autonomous robot that has four
 287 large payload bays allowing collection of large-volume filtered samples and filtered and



unfiltered waters (Figure 3; Breier et al., 2020; Jakuba et al., 2018). Recent use has demonstrated its robustness in collecting hundreds of station/sample depths and thousands of subsamples per expedition, enabling efficient basin-scale sampling of a multitude of complex biochemical samples (Cohen et al., 2024). *Clio* also provides new sampling capabilities that are not possible with wire-based deployments, including high-resolution vertical sampling at chlorophyll maxima, chemoclines, and nepheloid layers near the seafloor. Similarly, the midwater vehicle *Mesobot* has payload capacity for large-volume samplers, and sampling strategies can take advantage of *Mesobot*'s Lagrangian nature to collect time-series data (Govindarajan et al., 2023). Integration of sample return onto diverse robotic, towed, and moored platforms, each of which offers unique strengths and contextual sensor data, will enable a broad range of scientific questions to be addressed.

Medicine Lacks Comprehensive In-Clinic Diagnostics Despite Greater Resources

To offer some perspective on the challenge of 'imminent and inevitable' in situ sensors, we compare progress with the state-of-the-art in biomedicine, where the biomedical financial investment is orders of magnitude greater than environmental research investment. Despite this financial difference, the presence of analytics in the general practitioner's office or over-the-counter at the pharmacy remains constrained to a small number of simple physical measurements (e.g., blood pressure, oxygen saturation, temperature) and specific test kits (e.g. disease antigen kits and glucose monitoring). The use of at-home test kits has proliferated recently due to the COVID-19 pandemic, yet major investment is required to produce each reliable assay. Instead, the biomedical industry continues to rely heavily on blood collection facilities (phlebotomy) and sample shipment to massive centralized laboratories with advanced analytical equipment to achieve efficiency and economies of scale. In other words, the medical industry also relies on the sample collection, return, and laboratory analysis model for many of its critical analytical parameters, despite benefiting from orders of magnitude greater investment.

Improving the strategy for biomedical diagnostics is of course of great commercial interest. Notably, there was the recent spectacular failure of the Theranos company that aimed to develop an inexpensive multi-parameter analysis capability to be deployed within doctors' offices and pharmacies using pinprick-sized samples. Their research and development foci even overlapped with the technologies used in the ocean space such as microfluidics and proteomics techniques described above. Despite enormous investment, the company was



320 unable to deliver an in-the-clinic laboratory product, leading to bankruptcy and even fraud
321 convictions. One of the lessons learned from this episode described in the Journal of Clinical
322 Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine was to “be clear what your technology can do today – not
323 what you hope it can do someday” (Fiala and Diamandis 2018). In summary, even the large
324 medical industry still lacks widespread use of in-clinic diagnostics. And this is before adding the
325 additional engineering challenges of operating corrosive, biofouling seawater environments at
326 underwater pressures. Similar lessons can be adapted for the ocean science community:
327 where we continue to pursue our current and future goals for ocean observing without
328 overanticipating or emphasizing particular methods of data collection, e.g., not relying solely on
329 an idealized future full of AUVs equipped with in situ sensors capable of any analyte. Instead,
330 we as a community should broaden our approach to include a range of data collection
331 approaches. Doing so recognizes that we are already currently at the cusp of routinely fielding a
332 range of new robotic observing platforms, equipped with sensors and samplers, capable of
333 leveraging both the best available sensing technology and results derived from the most
334 advanced laboratory capabilities currently available.

335 **Combining Ocean Vital Signs and Diagnostics**

336 There is increasing interest in the study of ocean health and vitality (Halpern, 2020; Fernandez,
337 2022), with considerable investment in sensor-based applications. When proposing to
338 complement in situ sensors with sample return capabilities, a critique we repeatedly hear is that
339 sample return does not have sufficient resolution relative to the sampling by sensors (T, S, O₂)
340 deployed by floats, vehicles, and moorings to enable statistical interpretation and modeling. We
341 argue that this sensors-are-all-we-need argument is perhaps short-sighted. Can a sensors-only
342 approach to the question of ocean health produce the best information needed for detecting
343 ocean change and informing policymakers?

344 We can explore this using the human health analogy. When you go to the doctor’s office they
345 initially rely on the in-office measurements of vital signs such as temperature, blood pressure,
346 and oxygen saturation - note some similarities to the key CTD sensor parameters here. Would
347 you feel confident that that was sufficient information to understand your health and offer to
348 forgo the use of phlebotomy blood sampling and laboratory analyses? You could request
349 greater replication of those three parameters to improve confidence and allow statistical
350 analysis, such as thousands of temperature or oxygen measurements, even scaling up to
351 continuous monitoring with wearable sensors. Would those sensors be able to identify the



352 underlying cause of a patient's illness, such as cancer or a specific infection? Most would agree
353 that low-cost sensors measure *vital signs* that can observe health conditions such as fevers,
354 high blood pressure, and low blood oxygen. Yet they lack the resolving power of complementary
355 laboratory *diagnostics*, like cancer biomarkers, vitamin levels, cholesterol, and hormones to
356 name a few analytes routinely measured from a single blood sample with great economies of
357 scale. In general, in the clinic sensors are used as rapid, low-cost indicators of vital signs of
358 overall health that are complemented by information-rich laboratory diagnostic measurements
359 that can determine the underlying cause.

360 Similar analytical power is available now for natural environments, often using the same
361 analytical technology. We understand the complementary power of laboratory analyses in
362 human health settings, especially when coupled with advanced sample return capabilities as an
363 integrated analytical strategy. Why would we shun their use in ocean and planetary health,
364 especially if they can be globally deployed with economies of scale? We contend that the notion
365 that sample return has insufficient sampling resolution to be useful or scalable is short-sighted.
366 It depends on the question being asked and the purpose of the replication. This argument also
367 discounts the accumulation of observations across multiple deployments, regions, and time
368 periods that develop into comprehensive datasets capable of supporting statistical analysis of
369 environmental change. In ocean settings, transect spacing of several degrees using nutritional
370 biomarkers has been shown to be a reliable means to detect primary and co-limiting controls on
371 ocean productivity across ocean basins (Saito et al., 2014; Cohen et al., 2024). Higher spatial or
372 temporal sampling could be employed to understand process effects such as the influence of
373 storms or eddies. Often a stated end goal in oceanographic projects is to produce new or
374 improve existing computational models. However, it is worth arguing that, similar to the clinic,
375 laboratory diagnostics of environmental stress do not necessarily require a computational model
376 to be interpreted. Indeed, diagnostics can be used to validate and improve biogeochemical
377 general circulation model performance and forecasting capability.

378 **Conclusion**

379 To be clear, we are not arguing that sensors lack value: they have an important role in
380 environmental research and should continue to be developed. Instead, we are documenting
381 what is intuitive to many chemists, oceanographers, and ecologists: there are fundamental
382 chemical, biochemical, and engineering reasons that make inexpensive, robust in situ analyses
383 difficult to accomplish for many analytes. As we envision oceanographic research and



384 monitoring in the coming decades, it is prudent to remind ourselves that a dearth of diverse,
385 robust biological and chemical sensors is due to the reality that the analytical task at hand is
386 orders of magnitude harder than finding a needle in a haystack. While sample return lacks the
387 allure of real-time analysis, it is a proven approach that is efficiently and globally scalable by
388 coupling autonomous field sampling approaches to high-throughput laboratory analytical
389 methods. Together, sample return and laboratory analysis provide information-rich diagnostic
390 data that complement the sensor-based vital signs information.

391

392 **Author contribution and Competing interests**

393 Saito and McIlvin conceived of the perspective. Saito weighed the needles and conducted
394 calculations. All authors discussed the concepts and contributed to the manuscript writing.

395 **Financial Support**

396 This manuscript was supported by grants from National Science Foundation, (OCE-2431693
397 and OCE-2019589, C-COMP contribution number 102), the Simons Foundation, NOAA Ocean
398 Exploration Cooperative Institute award NA19OAR4320072, and a Stanley Watson Chair to
399 M.A.S.

400



401 **Acknowledgements**

402 We thank Natalie Cohen, Tristan Horne, Mike Jakuba, Annaliese Meyer, Viktoria Steck, and
403 Scott Wankel for feedback on the manuscript and many others for useful conversations. We
404 thank the WHOI Ocean Vital Signs community for constructive dialogue.

405

406 **Data Availability**

407 Data used for calculations is available within supplemental materials.



408 References

- 409 Achterberg, E. P. and Braungardt, C.: Stripping voltammetry for the determination of trace metal
 410 speciation and in-situ measurements of trace metal distributions in marine waters, *Anal. Chim.*
 411 *Acta*, 400, 381–397, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0003-2670\(99\)00619-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0003-2670(99)00619-4), 1999.
- 412 Aguiar, J. I., Ribeiro, S. O., Leite, A., Rangel, M., Rangel, A. O., and Mesquita, R. B.: Iron
 413 determination in natural waters using a synthesised 3-hydroxy-4-pyridione ligand in a newly
 414 developed microfluidic paper-based device, *Chemosensors*, 11, 101,
 415 <https://doi.org/10.3390/chemosensors11020101>, 2023.
- 416 Anderson, R. F.: GEOTRACES: Accelerating research on the marine biogeochemical cycles of
 417 trace elements and their isotopes, *Annu. Rev. Mar. Sci.*, 12, 49–85,
 418 <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-marine-010318-095123>, 2020.
- 419 Anonymous: The weight of a haystack, *Omeo Standard and Mining Gazette*, 12 May 1914, p. 4,
 420 1914.
- 421 Bertrand, E. M., Allen, A. E., Dupont, C. L., Norden-Krichmar, T. M., Bai, J., Valas, R. E., and
 422 Saito, M. A.: Influence of cobalamin scarcity on diatom molecular physiology and identification
 423 of a cobalamin acquisition protein, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA*, 109, E1762–E1771,
 424 <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1201731109>, 2012.
- 425 Breier, J. A., Jakuba, M. V., Saito, M. A., Dick, G. J., Grim, S. L., Chan, E. W., McIlvin, M. R.,
 426 Moran, D. M., Alanis, B. A., Allen, A. E., Dupont, C. L., and Johnson, R.: Revealing ocean scale
 427 biochemical structure with a deep-diving vertical profiling autonomous vehicle, *Sci. Robot.*, 5,
 428 eabc7104, <https://doi.org/10.1126/scirobotics.abc7104>, 2020.
- 429 Castagno, P., Capozzi, V., DiTullio, G. R., Falco, P., Fusco, G., Rintoul, S. R., Spezie, G., and
 430 Budillon, G.: Rebound of shelf water salinity in the Ross Sea, *Nat. Commun.*, 10, 5441,
 431 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-019-13083-8>, 2019.
- 432 Chappell, P. D., Moffett, J. W., Hynes, A. M., and Webb, E. A.: Molecular evidence of iron
 433 limitation and availability in the global diazotroph *Trichodesmium*, *ISME J.*, 6, 1728–1739,
 434 <https://doi.org/10.1038/ismej.2012.13>, 2012.
- 435 Cohen, N. R., McIlvin, M. R., Moran, D. M., Held, N. A., Saunders, J. K., Hawco, N. J.,
 436 Brosnahan, M., DiTullio, G. R., Lamborg, C., McCrow, J. P., and Dupont, C. L.: Dinoflagellates



- 437 alter their carbon and nutrient metabolic strategies across environmental gradients in the central
 438 Pacific Ocean, *Nat. Microbiol.*, 6, 173–186, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41564-020-00814-7>, 2021.
- 439 Cohen, N. R., Krinos, A. I., Kell, R. M., Chmiel, R. J., Moran, D. M., McIlvin, M. R., Lopez, P. Z.,
 440 Barth, A. J., Stone, J. P., Alanis, B. A., Chan, E. W., Breier, J. A., Jakuba, M. V., Johnson, R.,
 441 Alexander, H., and Saito, M. A.: Microeukaryote metabolism across the western North Atlantic
 442 Ocean revealed through autonomous underwater profiling, *Nat. Commun.*, 15, 7325,
 443 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-024-51583-4>, 2024.
- 444 Cook, F. (Ed.): *Journals of the Military Expedition of Major General John Sullivan Against the*
 445 *Six Nations of Indians in 1779*, Knapp, Peck & Thomson, Auburn, New York, 1887.
- 446 Fernandez, S. 2022. Taking Ocean Vital Signs - UC Santa Barbara's National Center for
 447 Ecological Analysis & Synthesis releases its 2022 Ocean Health Index score. December 6,
 448 2022. The Current. University of California. [https://news.ucsb.edu/2022/020786/taking-ocean-](https://news.ucsb.edu/2022/020786/taking-ocean-vital-signs)
 449 [vital-signs](https://news.ucsb.edu/2022/020786/taking-ocean-vital-signs)
- 450
- 451 Fiala, C. and Diamandis, E. P.: The meteoric rise and dramatic fall of Theranos: lessons learned
 452 for the diagnostic industry, *Clin. Chem. Lab. Med.*, 56, 1443–1446, [https://doi.org/10.1515/cclm-](https://doi.org/10.1515/cclm-2018-0353)
 453 [2018-0353](https://doi.org/10.1515/cclm-2018-0353), 2018.
- 454 Frischkorn, K. R., Haley, S. T., and Dyhrman, S. T.: Transcriptional and proteomic
 455 choreography under phosphorus deficiency and re-supply in the N₂ fixing cyanobacterium
 456 *Trichodesmium erythraeum*, *Front. Microbiol.*, 10, 330,
 457 <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmicb.2019.00330>, 2019.
- 458 Geißler, F., Achterberg, E. P., Beaton, A. D., Hopwood, M. J., Clarke, J. S., Mutzberg, A.,
 459 Mowlem, M. C., and Connelly, D. P.: Evaluation of a ferrozine based autonomous in situ lab-on-
 460 chip analyzer for dissolved iron species in coastal waters, *Front. Mar. Sci.*, 4, 322,
 461 <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2017.00322>, 2017.
- 462 Geißler, F., Achterberg, E. P., Beaton, A. D., Hopwood, M. J., Esposito, M., Mowlem, M. C.,
 463 Connelly, D. P., and Wallace, D.: Lab-on-chip analyser for the in situ determination of dissolved
 464 manganese in seawater, *Sci. Rep.*, 11, 2382, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-021-81779-3>,
 465 2021.



- 466 Gifford, S. M., Sharma, S., Rinta-Kanto, J. M., and Moran, M. A.: Quantitative analysis of a
 467 deeply sequenced marine microbial metatranscriptome, *ISME J.*, 5, 461–472,
 468 <https://doi.org/10.1038/ismej.2010.141>, 2011.
- 469 Gold, Z., Kelly, R. P., Shelton, A. O., Thompson, A. R., Goodwin, K. D., Gallego, R., Parsons, K.
 470 M., Thompson, L. R., Kacev, D., and Barber, P. H.: Message in a bottle: Archived DNA reveals
 471 marine heatwave-associated shifts in fish assemblages, *Environ. DNA*,
 472 <https://doi.org/10.1002/edn3.400>, 2023.
- 473 Govindarajan, A. F., McCartin, L., Adams, A., Allan, E., Belani, A., Francolini, R., Fujii, J.,
 474 Gomez-Ibañez, D., Kukulya, A., Marin, F., Tradd, K., Yoerger, D. R., McDermott, J. M., and
 475 Herrera, S.: Improved biodiversity detection using a large-volume environmental DNA sampler
 476 with in situ filtration and implications for marine eDNA sampling strategies, *Deep-Sea Res. Pt. I*,
 477 189, 103871, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsr.2022.103871>, 2022.
- 478 Govindarajan, A. F., Adams, A., Allan, E., Herrera, S., Lavery, A., Llopiz, J., McCartin, L.,
 479 Yoerger, D. R., and Zhang, W.: Advances in environmental DNA sampling for observing ocean
 480 twilight zone animal diversity, *Oceanography*, 36, 80–86,
 481 <https://doi.org/10.5670/oceanog.2023.s1.27>, 2023.
- 482 Grand, M. M., Chocholouš, P., Růžicka, J., Solich, P., and Measures, C. I.: Determination of
 483 trace zinc in seawater by coupling solid phase extraction and fluorescence detection in the Lab-
 484 On-Valve format, *Anal. Chim. Acta*, 923, 45–54, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aca.2016.03.056>,
 485 2016.
- 486 Gregg, M. C. and Cox, C. S.: Measurements of the oceanic microstructure of temperature and
 487 electrical conductivity, *Deep-Sea Res.*, 18, 925–934, 1971.
- 488 Gregg, M. C. and Cox, C. S.: The vertical microstructure of temperature and salinity, *Deep-Sea*
 489 *Res. Oceanogr. Abstr.*, 19, 355–376, 1972.
- 490 Halpern, B.S., 2020. Building on a decade of the Ocean Health Index. *One Earth*, 2(1), 30-33.
- 491 Held, N. A., Webb, E. A., McIlvin, M. M., Hutchins, D. A., Cohen, N. R., Moran, D. M., Kunde,
 492 K., Lohan, M. C., Mahaffey, C., Woodward, E. M. S., and Saito, M. A.: Co-occurrence of Fe and
 493 P stress in natural populations of the marine diazotroph *Trichodesmium*, *Biogeosciences*, 17,
 494 2537–2551, <https://doi.org/10.5194/bg-17-2537-2020>, 2020.



- 495 Herrera, S., Govindarajan, A.F., Andruszkiewicz Allan, E., Francolini, R., Frates, E., McCartin, L.,
 496 Pittoors, N.C., Sengthep, M., Stover, S., Vohsen, S. and Yang, N., 2026. Depth-dependent
 497 eDNA abundances across ecosystems inform deep-sea sampling strategies. *bioRxiv*, pp.2026-
 498 05.
- 499 Hristova, V.A. and Chan, D.W., 2019. Cancer biomarker discovery and translation: proteomics
 500 and beyond. *Expert review of proteomics*, 16(2), 93-103.
- 501 Hurst, T. K., Wang, D., Thompson, R. B., and Fierke, C. A.: Carbonic anhydrase II-based metal
 502 ion sensing: Advances and new perspectives, *Biochim. Biophys. Acta Proteins Proteom.*, 1804,
 503 393–403, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbapap.2009.09.031>, 2010.
- 504 Jackson, S. L., Spence, J., Janssen, D. J., Ross, A. R. S., and Cullen, J. T.: Determination of
 505 Mn, Fe, Ni, Cu, Zn, Cd and Pb in seawater using offline extraction and triple quadrupole ICP-
 506 MS/MS, *J. Anal. At. Spectrom.*, 33, 304–313, <https://doi.org/10.1039/C7JA00237H>, 2018.
- 507 Jacobson, A. W.: An instrument for recording continuously the salinity, temperature, and depth
 508 of sea water, *Int. Hydrogr. Rev.*, 1950.
- 509 Jakuba, M. V., Breier, J. A., Gómez-Ibáñez, D., Tradd, K., and Saito, M. A.: Clio: an
 510 autonomous vertical sampling vehicle for global ocean biogeochemical mapping, in: 2018
 511 IEEE/OES Autonomous Underwater Vehicle Workshop (AUV), 1–8,
 512 <https://doi.org/10.1109/AUV.2018.8729797>, 2018.
- 513 Johnson, K. S. and Coletti, L. J.: In situ ultraviolet spectrophotometry for high resolution and
 514 long-term monitoring of nitrate, bromide and bisulfide in the ocean, *Deep-Sea Res. Pt. I*, 49,
 515 1291–1305, 2002.
- 516 Johnson, K. S., Plant, J. N., Coletti, L. J., Jannasch, H. W., Sakamoto, C. M., Riser, S. C., Swift,
 517 D. D., Williams, N. L., Boss, E., Haëntjens, N., and Talley, L. D.: Biogeochemical sensor
 518 performance in the SOCCOM profiling float array, *J. Geophys. Res.-Oceans*, 122, 6416–6436,
 519 <https://doi.org/10.1002/2017JC012838>, 2017a.
- 520 Johnson, K. S., Plant, J. N., Dunne, J. P., Talley, L. D., and Sarmiento, J. L.: Annual nitrate
 521 drawdown observed by SOCCOM profiling floats and the relationship to annual net community
 522 production, *J. Geophys. Res.-Oceans*, 122, 6668–6683, <https://doi.org/10.1002/2017JC012839>,
 523 2017b.



- 524 Johnson, W. M., Kido Soule, M. C., Longnecker, K., Bhatia, M. P., Hallam, S. J., Lomas, M. W.,
 525 and Kujawinski, E. B.: Particulate and dissolved metabolite distributions along a latitudinal
 526 transect of the western Atlantic Ocean, *Limnol. Oceanogr.*, 68, 377–393,
 527 <https://doi.org/10.1002/lno.12275>, 2023.
- 528 Kellogg, R. M., Moosburner, M. A., Cohen, N. R., Hawco, N. J., McIlvin, M. R., Moran, D. M.,
 529 DiTullio, G. R., Subhas, A. V., Allen, A. E., and Saito, M. A.: Adaptive responses of marine
 530 diatoms to zinc scarcity and ecological implications, *Nat. Commun.*, 13, 1995,
 531 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-022-29603-y>, 2022.
- 532 Ma, J., Yuan, D., Lin, K., Feng, S., Zhou, T., and Li, Q.: Applications of flow techniques in
 533 seawater analysis: a review, *Trends Environ. Anal. Chem.*, 10, 1–10,
 534 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teac.2016.02.003>, 2016.
- 535 Moore, J. K., Doney, S. C., and Lindsay, K.: Upper ocean ecosystem dynamics and iron cycling
 536 in a global three-dimensional model, *Global Biogeochem. Cy.*, 18,
 537 <https://doi.org/10.1029/2004GB002220>, 2004.
- 538 Olson, R. J., Shalapyonok, A., and Sosik, H. M.: An automated submersible flow cytometer for
 539 analyzing pico- and nanophytoplankton: FlowCytobot, *Deep-Sea Res. Pt. I*, 50, 301–315,
 540 [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0967-0637\(03\)00003-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0967-0637(03)00003-7), 2003.
- 541 Patin, N. V. and Goodwin, K. D.: Capturing marine microbiomes and environmental DNA: A field
 542 sampling guide, *Front. Microbiol.*, 13, 1026596, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmicb.2022.1026596>,
 543 2023.
- 544 Pierrot, D., Neill, C., Sullivan, K., Castle, R., Wanninkhof, R., Lüger, H., Johannessen, T., Olsen,
 545 A., Feely, R. A., and Cosca, C. E.: Recommendations for autonomous underway pCO₂
 546 measuring systems and data-reduction routines, *Deep-Sea Res. Pt. II*, 56, 512–522,
 547 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsr2.2008.12.005>, 2009.
- 548 Preston, C., Yamahara, K., Pargett, D., Weinstock, C., Birch, J., Roman, B., Jensen, S.,
 549 Cannon, B., Jenkins, R., Ryan, J., and Scholin, C.: Autonomous eDNA collection using an
 550 uncrewed surface vessel over a 4200-km transect of the eastern Pacific Ocean, *Environ. DNA*,
 551 <https://doi.org/10.1002/edn3.468>, 2023.
- 552 Ren, A.H., Fiala, C.A., Diamandis, E.P. and Kulasingam, V., 2020. Pitfalls in cancer biomarker
 553 discovery and validation with emphasis on circulating tumor DNA. *Cancer Epidemiology,*
 554 *Biomarkers & Prevention*, 29(12), 2568-2574.



- 555 Rogers, W.: Journal of Rev. William Rogers, D.D., in: *Journals of the Military Expedition of*
556 *Major General John Sullivan Against the Six Nations of Indians in 1779*, edited by: Cook, F.,
557 Knapp, Peck & Thomson, Auburn, New York, p. 262, journal dated 1779, published 1887.
- 558 Saito, M. A., McIlvin, M. R., Moran, D. M., Goepfert, T. J., DiTullio, G. R., Post, A. F., and
559 Lamborg, C. H.: Multiple nutrient stresses at intersecting Pacific Ocean biomes detected by
560 protein biomarkers, *Science*, 345, 1173–1177, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1256450>, 2014.
- 561 Saito, M. A., Dorsk, A., Post, A. F., McIlvin, M. R., Rappé, M. S., DiTullio, G. R., and Moran, D.
562 M.: Needles in the blue sea: Sub-species specificity in targeted protein biomarker analyses
563 within the vast oceanic microbial metaproteome, *Proteomics*, 15, 3521–3531,
564 <https://doi.org/10.1002/pmic.201400630>, 2015.
- 565 Saito, M. A., McIlvin, M. R., Moran, D. M., Santoro, A. E., Dupont, C. L., Rafter, P. A., Saunders,
566 J. K., Kaul, D., Lamborg, C. H., Westley, M., and Valois, F.: Abundant nitrite-oxidizing
567 metalloenzymes in the mesopelagic zone of the tropical Pacific Ocean, *Nat. Geosci.*, 13, 355–
568 362, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41561-020-0565-6>, 2020.
- 569 Saito, M.A., Alexander, H., Benway, H.M., Boyd, P.W., Gledhill, M., Kujawinski, E.B., Levine,
570 N.M., Maheigan, M., Marchetti, A., Obernosterer, I. and Santoro, A.E., 2024. The dawn of the
571 BioGeoSCAPES program. *Oceanography*, 37(2), 162-166.
- 572 Salter, I., Joensen, M., Kristiansen, R., Steingrund, P., and Vestergaard, P.: Environmental DNA
573 concentrations are correlated with regional biomass of Atlantic cod in oceanic waters, *Commun.*
574 *Biol.*, 2, 461, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s42003-019-0696-8>, 2019.
- 575 Schlitzer, R., Anderson, R. F., Dodas, E. M., Lohan, M., Geibert, W., Tagliabue, A., and
576 Lechtenfeld, O. J.: The GEOTRACES intermediate data product 2017, *Chem. Geol.*, 493, 210–
577 223, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chemgeo.2018.05.040>, 2018.
- 578 Scholin, C., Doucette, G., Jensen, S., Roman, B., Pargett, D., Marin III, R., Preston, C., Jones,
579 W., Feldman, J., Everlove, C., Harris, A., Alvarado, N., Massion, E., Birch, J., Greenfield, D.,
580 Vrijenhoek, R., Mikulski, C., and Jones, K.: Remote detection of marine microbes, small
581 invertebrates, harmful algae, and biotoxins using the Environmental Sample Processor (ESP),
582 *Oceanography*, 22, 158–167, <https://doi.org/10.5670/oceanog.2009.46>, 2009.
- 583 Scholin, C. A., Birch, J., Jensen, S., Marin III, R., Massion, E., Pargett, D., Preston, C., Roman,
584 B., and Ussler III, W.: The quest to develop ecogenomic sensors: a 25-year history of the
585 Environmental Sample Processor (ESP) as a case study, *Oceanography*, 30, 100–113, 2017.



- 586 Swalwell, J. E., Ribalet, F., and Armbrust, E. V.: SeaFlow: A novel underway flow-cytometer for
 587 continuous observations of phytoplankton in the ocean, *Limnol. Oceanogr.-Meth.*, 9, 466–477,
 588 <https://doi.org/10.4319/lom.2011.9.466>, 2011.
- 589 Tagliabue, A., Mtshali, T., Aumont, O., Bowie, A. R., Klunder, M. B., Roychoudhury, A. N., and
 590 Swart, S.: A global compilation of dissolved iron measurements: focus on distributions and
 591 processes in the Southern Ocean, *Biogeosciences*, 9, 2333–2349, [https://doi.org/10.5194/bg-9-](https://doi.org/10.5194/bg-9-2333-2012)
 592 2333-2012, 2012.
- 593 Truelove, N. K., Patin, N. V., Min, M., Pitz, K. J., Preston, C. M., Yamahara, K. M., Zhang, Y.,
 594 Raanan, B. Y., Kieft, B., Hobson, B., and Thompson, L. R.: Expanding the temporal and spatial
 595 scales of environmental DNA research with autonomous sampling, *Environ. DNA*, 4, 972–984,
 596 <https://doi.org/10.1002/edn3.299>, 2022.
- 597 Ustick, L. J., Larkin, A. A., Garcia, C. A., Garcia, N. S., Brock, M. L., Lee, J. A., Wiseman, N. A.,
 598 Moore, J. K., and Martiny, A. C.: Metagenomic analysis reveals global-scale patterns of ocean
 599 nutrient limitation, *Science*, 372, 287–291, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abe6301>, 2021.
- 600 Vuillemin, R., Le Roux, D., Dorval, P., Bucas, K., Sudreau, J. P., Hamon, M., Le Gall, C., and
 601 Sarradin, P. M.: CHEMINI: A new in situ CHEMical MINiaturized analyzer, *Deep-Sea Res. Pt. I*,
 602 56, 1391–1399, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsr.2009.02.002>, 2009.
- 603 Walworth, N.G., Saito, M.A., Lee, M.D., McIlvin, M.R., Moran, D.M., Kellogg, R.M., Fu, F.X.,
 604 Hutchins, D.A. and Webb, E.A., 2022. Why environmental biomarkers work: transcriptome–
 605 proteome correlations and modeling of multistressor experiments in the marine bacterium
 606 *Trichodesmium*. *Journal of Proteome Research*, 21(1), 77-89.
 607 <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.jproteome.1c00517>
- 608 Wang, Z. A., Sonnichsen, F. N., Bradley, A. M., Hoering, K. A., Lanagan, T. M., Chu, S. N.,
 609 Hammar, T. R., and Camilli, R.: In situ sensor technology for simultaneous spectrophotometric
 610 measurements of seawater total dissolved inorganic carbon and pH, *Environ. Sci. Technol.*, 49,
 611 4441–4449, <https://doi.org/10.1021/es504893n>, 2015.
- 612 Wang, Z. A., Moustahfid, H., Mueller, A. V., Michel, A. P. M., Mowlem, M., Glazer, B. T.,
 613 Mooney, T. A., Michaels, W., McQuillan, J. S., Robidart, J. C., Churchill, J., Sourisseau, M.,
 614 Daniel, A., Schaap, A., Monk, S., Friedman, K., and Brehmer, P.: Advancing observation of
 615 ocean biogeochemistry, biology, and ecosystems with cost-effective in situ sensing
 616 technologies, *Front. Mar. Sci.*, 6, 519, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2019.00519>, 2019.



617 Yamahara, K. M., Preston, C. M., Birch, J., Walz, K., Marin III, R., Jensen, S., Pargett, D.,
618 Roman, B., Ussler III, W., Zhang, Y., and Ryan, J.: In situ autonomous acquisition and
619 preservation of marine environmental DNA using an autonomous underwater vehicle, *Front.*
620 *Mar. Sci.*, 6, 373, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2019.00373>, 2019.

621 Yang, N., Allan, E.A., Stover, S.E., Grassian, B.D., Sosik, H.M., Llopiz, J.K. and Govindarajan,
622 A.F., 2026. Eukaryotic biodiversity and ecological networks from the surface to the mesopelagic
623 in the Northwest Atlantic Slope Water. *Molecular Ecology*, 35(10), p.e70411.

624 Yoerger, D. R., Govindarajan, A. F., Howland, J. C., Llopiz, J. K., Wiebe, P. H., Curran, M., Fujii,
625 J., Gomez-Ibanez, D., Katija, K., Robison, B. H., and Hobson, B. W.: A hybrid underwater robot
626 for multidisciplinary investigation of the ocean twilight zone, *Sci. Robot.*, 6, eabe1901,
627 <https://doi.org/10.1126/scirobotics.abe1901>, 2021.

628 Zeng, H. H., Thompson, R. B., Maliwal, B. P., Fones, G. R., Moffett, J. W., and Fierke, C. A.:
629 Real-time determination of picomolar free Cu(II) in seawater using a fluorescence-based fiber
630 optic biosensor, *Anal. Chem.*, 75, 6807–6812, <https://doi.org/10.1021/ac0345401>, 2003.

631

632