

Session K

Global change and aquatic bioinvasions

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The invasion of alien species is considered one of the most important factors influencing marine ecosystem structure and functions, besides climate change, exploitation of marine living resources and habitat alteration. Most likely, it is the interaction of different ecosystem drivers that ultimately determines the population abundance and role of an alien species in a new environment. In marine ecosystems, most of the ecological impact caused by alien species has been confined to coastal areas and/or regional seas, though it has been predicted that the 'invasion front' is moving towards the open ocean. Although the 'International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments' was adopted at IMO already in 2004, an insufficient number of countries have signed the convention to bring it into effect. Furthermore, most countries do not have ballast water regulations in place. Therefore, the risk for new ballast water mediated invasions will remain high until the Convention standards become applicable.

Contributions are welcomed on the following topics:

- Ecosystem drivers and processes determining alien species introductions/outbreaks
- Interactions between global stressors that include biological invasions
- Assessment of ecological and economic impacts caused by alien species
- Prediction of future invasions
- Ecosystem effects of the use of alien species, e.g. in aquaculture

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