

Third Nordic-Baltic diatom intercalibration/harmonization exercise 2011

Dear Nordic-Baltic diatom colleagues!

(please spread the letter to anybody in our region who might be interested)

Please feel invited to the third Nordic-Baltic diatom intercalibration/harmonization exercise. For those unfamiliar with the first exercises in 2007 and 2009, please check the webpage <http://www.norbaf.net> for information on the results.

The intercalibration is organized by NorBAF (Nordic Network - Benthic Algae in Freshwater, www.norbaf.net) and the Department of Aquatic Sciences and Assessment, SLU (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, <http://www.slu.se/vatten-miljo>).

It is important to harmonize the diatom identification of the Nordic-Baltic diatomists in order to improve comparisons between different diatom studies, especially as diatom monitoring has increased because of the Water Framework Directive. Based on the experience from the activities in 2006, 2007 and 2009, the NorBAF participants agreed to continue with diatom intercalibrations every second year. SWEDAC (Swedish Board for Accreditation and Conformity Assessment) is informed about our activities and the participation of Swedish laboratories and consultants.

The diatom intercalibration will be performed as follows:

1. All participants will receive a setup of 4 untreated diatom samples and will have to prepare their slides themselves.
2. Preparation, identification and enumeration of the diatoms will follow the Swedish Standard method using diatoms for environmental monitoring ('Påväxt i rinnande vatten – kiselalgsanalys'). In: Handledning för miljöövervakning: Sötvatten, Version 3:1 : 2009. Short English description in 'Environmental Quality Criteria – Lakes and Watercourses. Swedish EPA, report no. 5050). Download method at http://www.naturvardsverket.se/upload/02_tillstandet_i_miljon/Miljoovervakning/undersokn_typ/sotvatten/pavaxt.pdf. See also hints at <http://www.slu.se/sv/fakulteter/nl/om-fakulteten/institutioner/institutionen-for-vatten-och-miljo/laboratorier/biologiska-laboratoriet/biologiska-analysmetoder/pavaxtalger-som-miljoindikator/kiselalgspreparering/>
3. The Swedish Standard taxa list must be used when reporting results (deadline 31.10.2011). The list will be sent to all participants. The list is new and currently under revision as it will be included in The Swedish Taxonomy Initiative. We will be pleased if you inform us if you will find any errors in the list. Note that the taxa list includes even rare taxa. Please make sure that you check all your identified taxa carefully, especially in the case you find it noted as rare in the literature.
4. The counts will be evaluated according to Kelly (2001). The results of each participant will be compared with the results of two auditors, familiar with the Swedish Standard method and the Nordic flora (Amelie Jarlman, Jarlman Konsult AB, and Bernt Sandell, BS Sötvattenkonsult).
5. All results will be published on NorBAFs homepage. The participants can choose if they wish to be published with name or anonymously on the homepage. General information on the dominant taxa and most common errors will be published, with photos, on the NorBAF homepage.

6. The results will also be discussed during a workshop held at Norr Malma field station, lake Erken, in the autumn/winter 2011/2012 (similar to 2006 and 2007). All participants are invited to participate and discuss the results, and also discuss solutions to problematic taxa groups. We will also discuss new literature and new insights gained by the ongoing taxonomical collection done by Amelie Jarlman and Bart van de Vijver. You are welcome to bring own samples if you wish.
7. The price for the intercalibration exercise will be 3000 SEK. The price of the workshop will be announced later. For Master students from the Nordic countries, there is the possibility to apply for funding for the intercalibration including workshop (similar to a diatom course) to the Nordic School of Phycology (<http://www.nordicphycology.info>).

Deadlines:

- 30 June 2011 – Announcement of interest and address (to which the samples will be sent) to Maria Kahlert (maria.kahlert@slu.se)
- June-July 2011 - Samples will be sent to the participants
- 31 October 2011 - Results must be sent to Maria Kahlert (maria.kahlert@slu.se)

Kind regards,

Maria Kahlert, network coordinator

Reference:

Kelly, M. (2001): Use of similarity measures for quality control of benthic diatom samples. *Wat. Res.* Vol. 35 (11), 2784-2788.