



The influence of river basins on metacommunities

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River networks are dendritic and have a physical direction. The influence of these spatial preconditions on the dispersal of species and the dynamics within metacommunities has been the focus of research for a number of years.

The latest scientific results of research groups around the world, among them those in Eawag, appeared in January in a special edition of *Freshwater Biology*. Co-editor of the open-access publication is Eawag researcher Florian Altermatt from the Aquatic Ecology Department.

Working with various groups of species, from diatoms to fish, the researchers investigated how the river network influences patterns and processes like predator-prey relationships, material transport or the spread of pathogens. A contribution from Eawag illuminated the distribution of population densities in river networks. “All the investigations show that the spatial structure, networks and dynamics in river systems are major factors in the dispersal and function of metacommunities”, says Altermatt.



Original publication

(open access) : Metacommunities in river networks: The importance of network structure and connectivity on patterns and processes, Jonathan D. Tonkin, Jani Heino, Florian Altermatt:
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