

PDF - KONSTANZ SUMMER SCHOOL 2018 ON ISOTOPE ECOLOGY - researchcub.info

The use of stable isotope analysis is central to environmental studies, providing dating methods, tracers, rate information, and fingerprints for biological, ecological and chemical processes in almost every setting. To this end, stable isotopes of several elements have been applied in terrestrial, atmospheric, and aquatic studies, both in current and ancient environments rendering powerful tracers and rate monitors. It has become an essential tool for ecosystem research, clearly designating nutrient and molecule sources, providing quantitative information using mixing models and identifying physical and chemical processes on the turnover rates of processes both at organismal and ecosystem level. Recent advances in stable isotope analysis have contributed greatly to our understanding of niche partitioning in both plants and animals; compound-specific isotope analysis has proved an important route towards discerning trophic ecology and the fate of molecules in current and past environments. The applications of stable isotope analysis are multifold and their importance to environmental studies has become vital. Clearly, this tool will continue to be indispensable in several fields of research, including studies of environmental health (pollution and contamination), environmental management, climate change, (bio)geochemistry, archaeology, paleontology and ecology. Besides further utilization of existing methodologies, novel applications will continue to be established. These will likely include discovering new isotopic and trace element characteristics of living and non-living things, but also expounding isotopic variations that are typical characteristics of various unique processes. The Stable Isotope Group of the University of Konstanz organized the Summer School 2018 on Isotope Ecology. 42 participants and 11 invited speakers interacted for three days in April discussing their projects and ideas on the topic of the Summer School 'What can we learn from the past into the future? Stable isotopes in ancient and contemporary environments'. Several papers in issues 2 and 4 (volume 55) of the journal *Isotopes in Environmental and Health Studies* seek to embrace the extent of the application of stable isotope analysis related to various environmental studies including routine and recent advances. An example is the investigation by Funes et al. on trawling activities altering the trophic structure of fish communities affecting long-term modifications of trophic level change in the marine environment [1]. Paleo-diet and drinking water are in the focus of stable isotope analyses from teeth of white-tailed deers presented by Rivera-Araya et al. [2] shining a light on historic living conditions. Meier-Augenstein and Schimmelmann submitted a guide for decent exertion of stable isotope reference materials, already published in issue 2 and highly cited [3]. Two further articles from the Konstanz Summer School 2018 will still follow in volume 55.

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