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Stakeholder perspectives on the importance of rare-species research for deep-sea environmental management

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Abstract

The apparent prevalence of rare species (rarity) in the deep sea is a concern for environmental management and conservation of biodiversity. Rare species are often considered at risk of extinction and, in terrestrial and shallow water environments, have been shown to play key roles within an ecosystem. In the deep-sea environment, current research focuses primarily on abundant species and deep-sea stakeholders are questioning the importance of rare species in ecosystem functioning. This study asks whether deep-sea stakeholders (primarily scientists) view rare-species research as a priority in guiding environmental management. Delphi methodology (i.e., an iterative survey approach) was used to understand views about whether or not 'deep-sea scientists should allocate more resources to research on rare species in the deep sea, even if this means less resources might be available for abundant-species research.' Results suggest little consensus regarding the prioritization of resources for rare-species research. From Survey 1 to Survey 3, the average participant response shifted toward a view

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