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# Residence time, mineralization processes and groundwater origin within a carbonate coastal aquifer with a thick unsaturated zone

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#### Abstract

This study aims at establishing groundwater residence times, identifying mineralization processes and determining groundwater origins within a carbonate coastal aquifer with thick unsaturated zone and lying on a granitic depression. A multi-tracer approach (major ions,  $SiO_2$ ,  $Br^-$ ,  $Ba^+$ ,  $Sr^{2+}$ , <sup>18</sup>O, <sup>2</sup>H, <sup>13</sup>C, <sup>3</sup>H, Ne, Ar) combined with a groundwater residence time determination using CFCs and SF<sub>6</sub> allows defining the global setting of the study site. A typical mineralization conditioned by the sea sprays and the carbonate matrix helped to validate the groundwater weighted residence times from using a binary mixing model. Terrigenic SF<sub>6</sub> excesses have been detected and quantified, which permits to identify a groundwater flow from the surrounding fractured granites towards the lower aquifer principally. The use of CFCs and SF<sub>6</sub> as a first hydrogeological investigation tool is possible and very relevant despite the thick unsaturated zone and the hydraulic connexion with a granitic environment.

#### Key words

Residence time, CFCs, SF<sub>6</sub>, coastal aquifer, flow pattern, Corsica

#### 1. Introduction

The residence time of groundwater is a fundamental parameter for the understanding of hydrogeosystems functioning (McCallum et al., 2014; Suckow, 2014). Indeed, the groundwater residence time documents on contaminant transport and sustainability of water

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