

Editor's note for this issue dedicated to the 2021 mucilage in the Sea of Marmara

An anomalous mucilage or sea snots (“deniz salyası” in Turkish) started in early spring 2021 in the Sea of Marmara and Turkish part of the North Aegean Sea. Earlier in 2007 and 2008, however, we had already witnessed mucilage as large aggregates formed in the Sea of Marmara.

A dinoflagellate species, *Gonyaulax fragilis*, was abundant in the mucilage in the Sea of Marmara in 2008. But in 2021 the main abundant phytoplankton species was different, *Phaeocystis pouchetii*. The process of mucilage formation took place mainly in the upper water column, above the main pycnocline, thus seen on the sea surface, but later sank to the bottom. For the moment with limited knowledge, the main impact was observed on the benthic species and very little information is available about the impact on the pelagic species and entire biota. In this special issue, we aimed to compile the relevant information about the 2021 mucilage event as much as possible with the help of our experts.

A long-term monitoring study is crucial for better understanding of both damage made by and recovery process of the mucilage event in the Sea of Marmara and the North Aegean Sea. The impacts of the mass mucilage event are largely investigated by various scientists from different points of view. This mucilage can easily affect our food security problem, thus regional cooperation is essential for the Aegean and Mediterranean Sea.

This issue is published proudly by Turkish Marine Research Foundation and our journal to exchange information among scientists and to contribute to the scientific debate about marine mucilage in the Turkish waters.

Finally, the Sea of Marmara is the only Turkish inland marine water and we have to protect this unique sea. This is a historical and full responsibility of the Turkish government, as well as the whole society and scientific community. Otherwise, the Black Sea and Aegean Sea can also be easily impacted by this polluted and deteriorated marine water mass.

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