Editorial

In the Southern Ocean benthic pelagic coupling is one of the most important processes explaining the carbon cycle. In this system there is a marked seasonality in primary productivity in surface waters in spring-summer that is transformed into available food (organic matter) for benthic organisms. This food reaches the bottom within hours or days. However, the quantity and quality of the organic matter available for organisms living on the bottom during this period of the year have never been directly measured in the Weddel Sea.

In this issue of *Scientia Marina* we feature the paper: "Transfer of seston lipids during a flagellate bloom from the surface to the benthic community in the Weddell Sea" by Rossi and coauthors. In this article the authors show that part of the organic matter is transferred practically unaltered from the surface to deeper layers. The transport of this organic matter enhanced by diatom aggregates, compaction into faecal pellets, and wind stress reinforce the transfer of lipid-rich material with high nutritive quality for benthic organisms. Hence, the diatom-driven transfer of material may constitute the main food supply for the benthic community to replace the lack of fresh organic matter pulses during the autumn-winter months. We think that this article contributes to knowledge of the interaction between pelagic and benthic communities in Antarctic waters. We hope you enjoy this and the other articles included in this issue.

Editorial Board

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