

The Group for Aquatic Primary Productivity (GAP)

The Group for Aquatic Primary Productivity (GAP) arose in 1980 from discussions during the SIL Congress in Kyoto. After a long day of plenaries, Zvy Dubinsky, Max Tilzer, Mitsuro Sakamoto and Tom Berman discussed possibilities for a “different kind of meeting” and the idea of GAP took shape. The GAP format is a hands-on Workshop, focusing on topics relevant to measuring aquatic primary production, intended to attract both freshwater and marine scientists. Participants bring state-of-the-science equipment and methodology to actually run experiments that are later published in a peer-reviewed journal. Attendees are a mix of distinguished elder practitioners, younger scientists and students to enhance exchange of experience and expertise.



Attendees of GAP 8 at the Inter University Institute (IUI) of Marine Sciences, Eilat, Israel.

In the 28 years since inception, there have been 8 such GAP Workshops, the most recent being held between 30 March and 8 April, 2008 at the Inter University Institute (IUI) of Marine Sciences, Eilat in Israel, and organized by Ilana Berman-Frank and Zvy Dubinsky. Ilana and Zvy were ably assisted by a local organizing committee and by Dr. Noga Stambler (BIU) who oversaw the complex mission of coordinating all the required equipment, consumables and infrastructure for the experimental work as well as making sure that all packages/boxes of equipment that were pre-mailed arrived on time and did not get stuck in Customs or Security.

GAP-Eilat had over ninety registered participants from across the globe (56 senior researchers and 40 graduate students; see Table 1). In the history of the GAP workshops, this was the largest meeting and the most diverse in the experimental environments and participants. During the first two days of the meeting, presentations were made by keynote speakers and group leaders. These lectures were open to all faculty and staff of IUI in addition to GAP members, and were attended by over 100 people. The major focus of the workshop was the experimental work done over the ensuing 6-7 days by seven working groups, spanning diverse habitats and organisms: 1) an Open-Water group; 2) phytoplankton-respiration; 3) Macroalgae; 4) Seagrasses; 5) Saltern Group - looking at the photosynthetic organisms of the nearby saltern-Ponds; 6) the Coral Reef Group; 7) a group

looking at growth and photosynthesis of microalgae in Bioreactors. Two of the workgroups (3 & 7) were hosted by the IOLR National Center for Mariculture in Eilat. The workshop concluded with summaries and presentations by each of the groups on their preliminary results. During the workshop Prof. Zvy Dubinsky delivered a free public lecture entitled "Life and Death in the Coral Reef" which was attended by ~100 people from Eilat and the vicinity. The invited presentations and the papers resulting from the experimental work will be published by a special volume of Aquatic Microbial Ecology (AME) in 2009.

Table 1: Registrations for GAP-Eilat according to country of participants.

Country of participants	Number
Australia	6
Austria	1
Belgium	1
Canada	1
Chile	1
Greece	1
Czech Republic	7
Denmark	1
Germany	8
Hong Kong	1
Israel	46
Italy	1
Holland	1
Portugal	4
Slovenia	2
Spain	4
UK	6
USA	3
Total	96 (40 students, 56 faculty)

After many years service, Tom Berman and Zvy Dubinsky stepped down from the committee at the Eilat meeting and the GAP membership owes them a great debt for their role in initiating the organization and contributing to it ever since - and even now we are sure we can count on their continued advice and participation in workshops!

A new international committee for GAP was elected and comprises:

John Beardall (Australia) and Vivian Montecino (Chile) (joint chairpersons), Ilana Berman-Frank (Israel), Pat Neale (USA), Ruben Sommaruga (Austria), Katrin Teubner (Austria), Jean-Pierre Gattuso (France), Jacco Kromkamp (The Netherlands) and Félix Figueroa (Spain).



A crust from a saltern pond showing bands of different photoautotrophic groups



GAP co-chairperson, John Beardall, pondering the complexities of photosynthesis in a bioreactor!

Félix Figueroa has agreed to investigate the possibilities for running the next GAP Workshop in Spain in early 2011. Ilana Berman-Frank has also agreed to keep the web site open and details of the next meeting will be posted there (<http://www.gap-aquatic.org/>) as soon as they become available.

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