Non-Redfield Carbon and Nitrogen Cycling in the Arctic: Effects of Ecosystem Structure and Dynamics

Kendra L. Daly

University of Tennessee, Knoxville, kdaly@marine.usf.edu

Douglas W. R. Wallace

Universitat Kiel

Walker O. Smith Jr.

Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Annelie Skoog

University of Connecticut

Rubén Lara

Zentrum fur Marine Tropenokologie

See next page for additional authors

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Authors
Non-Redfield carbon and nitrogen cycling in the Arctic: Effects of ecosystem structure and dynamics

Kendra L. Daly, Douglas W. R. Wallace, Walker O. Smith Jr., Annelie Skoog, Rubén Lara, Michel Gosselin, Eva Falck, and Patricia L. Yager

Abstract. The C:N ratio is a critical parameter used in both global ocean carbon models and field studies to understand carbon and nutrient cycling as well as to estimate exported carbon from the euphotic zone. The so-called Redfield ratio (C:N = 6.6 by atoms) [Redfield et al., 1963] is widely used for such calculations. Here we present data from the NE Greenland continental shelf that show that most of the C:N ratios for particulate (autotrophic and heterotrophic) and dissolved pools and rates of transformation among them exceed Redfield proportions from June to August, owing to species composition, size, and biological interactions. The ecosystem components that likely comprised sinking particles and had relatively high C:N ratios (geometric means) included (1) the particulate organic matter (C:N = 8.9) dominated by nutrient-deficient diatoms, resulting from low initial nitrate concentrations (approximately 4 \( \mu M \)) in Arctic surface waters; (2) the dominant zooplankton, herbivorous copepods (C:N = 9.6), having lipid storage typical of Arctic copepods; and (3) copepod fecal pellets (C:N = 33.2). Relatively high dissolved organic carbon concentrations (median 105 \( \mu M \)) were approximately 25 to 45 \( \mu M \) higher than reported for other systems and may be broadly characteristic of Arctic waters. A carbon-rich dissolved organic carbon pool also was generated during summer. Since the magnitude of carbon and nitrogen uncoupling in the surface mixed layer appeared to be greater than in other regions and occurred throughout the productive season, the C:N ratio of particulate organic matter may be a better conversion factor than the Redfield ratio to estimate carbon export for broad application in northern high-latitude systems.

1. Introduction

The role of the marine biosphere in the global carbon cycle is controversial and remains poorly constrained owing to uncertainties in the magnitude and natural variability of carbon export from the euphotic zone. There is also a lack of basic information about the various factors that govern the biological activity influencing the quantity and nature of carbon export [Longhurst, 1991; Siegenthaler and Sarmiento, 1993]. Biogeochemical dynamics in high-latitude systems, in particular, are not well known, although there have been recent upward revisions of annual new production and carbon export [e.g., Walsh et al., 1989; Smith et al., 1991].

The Redfield ratio [Redfield et al., 1963] is a critical parameter used in both global ocean carbon models and field studies to understand carbon and nutrient cycling [e.g., Campbell and Aarup, 1992; Najjar et al., 1992; Hansell et al., 1993; Shaffer, 1996; Six and Maier-Reimer, 1996]. The Redfield ratio also is commonly used to estimate carbon export indirectly (see review by Jahne [1990] and references therein) and is based on the assumption that the elemental composition of particulate organic matter produced and exported from the surface layer occurs in constant proportion. On average, the Redfield molar ratio is 6.6 and includes both phytoplankton and zooplankton. Nitrogen is thought to be the element that limits primary production in many regions of the ocean under steady state conditions and on an annual timescale. Under such conditions, the nitrate flux from deep water to the surface should equal the amount of organic nitrogen exported from the surface, and, by Redfield ratio conversion, the organic carbon that enters deep water can be calculated [Dugdale and Goering, 1967; Eppley and Peterson, 1979]. Primary production resulting from nitrate uptake by phytoplankton is termed "new production," neglecting nitrogen fixation and allochthonous inputs, while production from ammonium or urea uptake is called "regenerated production."
May to August. May to early July on the Polarstern, and copepod body CN and egestion rates, which were measured on both ships from sea ice and are sites of elevated biological activity. The NEW from July 25 to August 20 aboard the USCGC Polar Sea

2.1. Study Area

2. Materials and Methods

2.2. Experimental Procedures

Water samples were collected using 10-L Niskin bottles that had been fitted with Teflon-coated, stainless steel springs mounted on a rosette sampling system. Subsamples were taken for the analysis of dissolved and particulate concentrations. Total carbon dioxide (TCO2) was analyzed by coulometric titration using a SOMMA system following the methods described by Johnson et al. [1993]. Dissolved oxygen and nutrients were analyzed using standard techniques (Winkler titrations and Technicon Autoanalyzer II [Wallace et al., 1995]). Urea samples were frozen at sea and later analyzed using the urea-diacetyl monoxime method on an Alpkem autoanalyzer [Koroleff, 1983]. Dissolved organic carbon was analyzed by the high-temperature catalytic oxidation method [Anderson et al., 1994] and dissolved organic nitrogen by the persulfate wet oxidation method [Lara et al., 1993].

Particulate organic carbon (POC) and nitrogen (PON) samples were determined by filtering known volumes of seawater through combusted GF/F Whatman glass fiber filters. At some stations, particulate matter was size fractionated in order to assess resource partitioning and quality of food available to grazers. Samples were gravity filtered through Nitex screens and then gently backwashed onto a combusted GF/F filter. Blanks consisted of refiltered filtrate. Filters were analyzed in a shore-based laboratory on a Carlo-Erba model EA 1108 elemental analyzer after high-temperature pyrolysis, using acetonitrile as a standard. Chlorophyll a fluorescence was measured immediately after collection on a calibrated Turner Designs model 10 fluorometer after sonification and extraction with 90% acetone. Primary productivity and nitrogen (nitrate, ammonium, and urea) uptake were measured using 14C and 15N-tracer techniques [Smith, 1995; W. O. Smith et al., 1997]. Samples were incubated on deck for approximately 24 hours under conditions that simulated the quantity and quality of in situ light and sea-surface temperatures.

Zooplankton were collected with a 1-m ring net fitted with a 149-μm mesh net and a non-filtering cod end. The net was towed vertically from 50 m to the surface at a slow sampling speed (10 m min⁻¹) in order to minimize stress to the animals. Undamaged, active adult female Calanus hyperboreus, C. glacialis, and Metridia longa were sorted into experimental
Figure 1. Location of the study area on the northeast Greenland shelf. Dotted lines are depth contours, the large arrow indicates the direction of the Greenland Current along the shelf edge, small arrows indicate the general circulation on the shelf [Budels and Schneider, 1995; Johnson and Niebauer, 1995], and square indicates location of time series station. Shading designates ice shelves.

containers filled with water collected from the depth of the chlorophyll maximum. All experimental containers were held in the dark at in situ temperatures (-1.5° to -1.0°C) for the duration of the experiment. The methods for measuring egestion, respiration, and excretion rates are described by Daly [1995, 1997]. Briefly, for carbon and nitrogen egestion rates, 2 to 4 Calanus or Metridia were placed in 70- or 90-mL glass jars containing water from the chlorophyll maximum. Rates measured in these jars were similar to those for copepods held in 2-L jars. The jars also held an inner plastic cylinder with a 500-µm mesh bottom to prevent the reingestion of fecal material. After 3 to 5 hours, pellets were siphoned onto combusted GF/F filters, rinsed briefly with distilled water, excess water was removed by hand pump, and the filters were frozen. Blanks were determined by using two filters (layered) for one of the replicates in each experiment. Copepods also were rinsed, blotted dry, and frozen. In the laboratory, pellets and copepods were dried at 60°C, weighed, and then were dried at 60°C, weighed, and measured for particulate carbon and nitrogen content in the shore-based laboratory.

Community respiration and excretion rates in Table 4 are the summation of daily release by life history stages of *Calanus hyperboreus*, *C. glacialis*, *C. finmarchicus*, *Metridia longa*, and *Pseudocalanus minutus* collected within known depth intervals by MOCNESS nets. Methods for zooplankton collection are described by Ashjian et al. [1995] and 1993 abundance data are from S. Smith et al. (unpublished data, 1995). Rates for female *C. hyperboreus* were measured, but for other stages and species, CO₂ production was estimated from oxygen consumption rates or respiration as a percent daily loss of body carbon using weight-specific rates for females, dry weights of life history stages (CI - CV, females), and abundance of each stage of copepod within depth intervals. Rates for copepodite stages CI - CV were assumed to be proportional to dry body weight [Ikeda, 1985]. Rates of CO₂ production and ammonium excretion for *C. glacialis* are from Bämsstedt and Tande [1985] and Tande [1988], respectively; those for *C. finmarchicus* are from Ikeda and Skjoldal [1989] and Meyzaud [1976], respectively; those for *Metridia* are from Haq [1967] and Bämsstedt et al. [1985], respectively; and *Pseudocalanus* values are from Bedo et al. [1990]. Dry weight and body carbon data are from Conover and Huntley [1991], Corkett and McLaren [1978], Daly [1997], Eilertson et al. [1989], Fouler [1978], and Smith [1988].
Table 1. Molar Concentrations, Rates, and Ratios of Carbon and Nitrogen Associated With Dissolved and Particulate Pools in the Euphotic Zone of Coastal Greenland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Euphotic Zone Pools and Rates</th>
<th>Number of Samples</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>C:N*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dissolved Pool</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIC</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>1385 - 2158</td>
<td>9.8 (6.6 - 12.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO₃</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.00 - 13.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH₄</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00 - 0.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIC:NO₃</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.8 (6.6 - 12.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOC</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>9 - 414</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DON</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>0.97 - 9.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOC:DON</td>
<td>182</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19.3 (18.3 - 19.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Particulate Pool</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micropalnton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POC</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>0.20 - 51.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PON</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.10 - 11.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POC:PON</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>0.20 - 699</td>
<td>8.90 (8.50 - 9.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C uptake</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>0.00 - 108</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO₃ uptake</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>0.00 - 23.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH₄ uptake</td>
<td>292</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: total N</td>
<td>287</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12.9 (11.4 - 14.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Copepods</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body C</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>17.5 - 321.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body N</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>1.90 - 28.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body C:N</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>32.1 - 86.3</td>
<td>9.60 (8.90 - 10.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO₂ respiration</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.12</td>
<td>2.68 - 14.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH₄ excretion</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>263.4</td>
<td>32.3 - 653.4</td>
<td>8.8 (4.60 - 16.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO₂:NH₄</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>1.30 - 93.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C egestion</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33.2 (22.8 - 48.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N egestion</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C:N egestion</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For comparison, the Redfield [Redfield et al., 1963] C:N ratio is 6.6 and the Takahashi [Takahashi et al., 1985] ratio is 7.6. Dissolved inorganic carbon (DIC), nitrate (NO₃), ammonium (NH₄), dissolved organic carbon (DOC) and nitrogen (DON), particulate organic carbon (POC) and nitrogen (PON) are in μmol L⁻¹; carbon and nitrogen (NO₃ + NH₄) uptake by phytoplankton is in nmol L⁻¹ h⁻¹. Copepods were female Calanus hyperboreus; body carbon (C) and nitrogen (N) are in μmol, carbon dioxide respiration (CO₂), ammonium excretion, and carbon and nitrogen egestion are in nmol ind⁻¹ h⁻¹. The euphotic zone was < 70 m.

* C:N ratios are geometric mean ratios with 95% confidence intervals in parentheses, except the consumption ratio (DIC:NO₃) was estimated by the geometric mean regression (95% CI) of salinity-normalized anomalies integrated 0 - 70 m.

2.3. Data Analyses

The effect of biological processes on total dissolved inorganic carbon was calculated following the methods described by Yager et al. [1995], which corrected for physical-chemical processes including dilution from sea ice melt and river input, calcium carbonate precipitation or dissolution, and atmospheric gas exchange due to warming or diffusion. The biological removal of DIC by animals with CaCO₃ shells appeared to be minimal since the regression of alkalinity on salinity did not suggest any evidence of nonconservative behavior with respect to calcium carbonate. Wind speed was low during the study (0 - 4 m s⁻¹), and thus estimation of diffusive gas exchange from the atmosphere was negligible [D. Wallace, unpublished data, 1997].

In previous studies, C:N stoichiometry usually has been determined by the model I regression, the mean of ratios of paired data (i.e., X of C:Ns), or as the ratio of the means of paired data [i.e., (X of C)/(X of N), with no variance]. These approaches are inappropriate for two reasons: (1) there is random and/or measurement error in x and y, and (2) these data often are not normally distributed [Ricker, 1973; McArdle, 1988]. Here we use either the geometric mean (GM) model II regression, the median, or the geometric mean ratio as a measure of central tendency (see Table 1), the latter being a better measure for ratio or rate data with a skewed or lognormal distribution [Zar, 1984]. The arithmetic mean overestimates the central trend for positively skewed lognormal frequency distributions (long right-hand tail), such as is common for biological data in marine systems, whereas both the geometric mean and the median are less sensitive to anomalies due to sample size and therefore are a more consistent or conservative measure of a variable to compare across different
systems. Statistical tests were made at a 5% significance level. Predictive regressions for $Y$ on $X$ were estimated by the ordinary least squares (LSR) method [Zar, 1984].

3. Results

During our study, only the molar C:N ratios for dissolved inorganic carbon to nitrate consumption and for copepod respiration to excretion were not significantly different ($\alpha = 0.05$) from Redfield-Takahashi stoichiometry; all other C:N ratios exceeded ($p < 0.001$) Redfield-Takahashi proportions (Table 1).

3.1. Dissolved Pool

Important features of our study area include the following. (1) An advective supply of water containing approximately 4 $\mu$M of nitrate supported production throughout summer [Wallace et al., 1995; Kattner and Budus, 1997]. In the upper 5 m of the water column, nitrate often was near or below the limit of detection (approximately 0.05 $\mu$M), increasing to 3 - 5 $\mu$M at the base of the euphotic zone (Figure 2). (2) Ammonium concentrations were near or below detection (approximately 0.05 $\mu$M). (3) Silicate concentrations decreased (from approximately 14 to < 2 $\mu$M) within the study area, reflective of diatom growth. The median concentrations of DIC, nitrate, and ammonium in the euphotic zone were 2073, 1.40, and 0.00 $\mu$M, respectively (Table 1). Phosphate concentrations (range, 0.07 to 1.06 $\mu$M) were never below detection limits in surface waters. Nitrate increased from approximately 5 to 7 $\mu$M between 50 and 100 m to approximately 13 $\mu$M below 150 to 200 m in depth, whereas phosphate showed little variation in deeper water (about 1.0 $\mu$M).

Seasonal anomalies of DIC, nitrate, dissolved organic carbon (DOC), and dissolved organic nitrogen (DON) driven by net biological processes are estimated by comparing salinity-normalized concentrations integrated over the euphotic zone (< 70 m) with "baseline" values measured below the euphotic zone, but in the same water mass (70 - 100 m) [Wallace et al., 1995], since temperature and salinity data for the study region indicated that the upper 100 m of the water column were well mixed by convection during winter. Regressions of nutrient inventories from the subeuphotic zone (70 - 100 m) showed little change over time (slope = 0; $p = 0.05$), suggesting that nutrient regeneration was not occurring at these depths during the study.

The slope (9.8) of the model II regression of DIC anomalies on nitrate anomalies (Table 1) for stations along a downstream transect in the polynya was not significantly different from either the Redfield molar C:N ratio (6.6) or the ratio (7.6) proposed by Takahashi et al. [1985]. Thus the null hypothesis that seasonal net biological processes approximated Redfield stoichiometry could not be rejected based on DIC:nitrate consumption or surface loss relative to deep water (winter) concentrations. The DIC consumption relative to particulate organic carbon (POC) accumulation (DIC:POC = 1.6) was nearly in balance given loss terms, such as grazing and phytoplankton release of DOC.

In contrast, the dissolved organic pool greatly exceeded the Redfield-Takahashi ratios. DOC appeared to be uncoupled from DON (linear regression coefficient, $b = 0$, $p = 0.301$). DOC concentrations were much higher in the surface layer compared to deep water, whereas there was little vertical gradient for DON. Because the DOC and DON concentrations for our study were measured during the beginning of the bloom in late May and June, it is not known whether concentrations increased by August. Using median concentrations from 70 to 100 m (100 $\mu$M DOC, 5.32 $\mu$M DON) as a baseline for winter surface concentrations, the median dissolved organic matter anomalies for the upper 70 m reached by early July were 23 $\mu$M DOC (range, 5 to 68 $\mu$M) and < 1 $\mu$M DON (range, -1.47 to 0.39 $\mu$M).

3.2. Particulate Pool: Phytoplankton

The distribution pattern of particulate organic carbon and nitrogen was variable over the study area, with median concentrations in the euphotic zone of 10.9 and 1.30 $\mu$M, respec-
The C:N ratios for POM were moderately elevated through the euphotic zone relative to Redfield-Takahashi stoichiometry, whereas the C:N ratios of phytoplankton uptake rates (N = nitrate plus ammonium assimilation) were significantly higher, particularly near the surface (Figure 3). The influence of detritus on the particulate C:N ratio could not be examined using the conventional LSR regression approach [e.g., Banse, 1974, 1977], because POC, PON, and chlorophyll had log-normal distributions and thus did not meet the assumptions of parametric regression [Zar, 1984].

Although the detrital contribution to particulate matter could not be directly assessed, nutrient limitation and the species composition of phytoplankton appear to have influenced the elevated ratios for POM and phytoplankton uptake rates throughout the productive season based on the following observations: (1) the highest C:N ratios of uptake rates by phytoplankton occurred at higher irradiance and relatively low nitrate concentrations and only approached Redfield near the bottom of the euphotic zone at low irradiance and relatively high nutrient levels (Figures 3 and 4); (2) the numerical and biomass dominant phytoplankton species in productive areas was the colonial Chaetoceros socialis, a diatom that has small cells (about 10 μm) embedded in a mucilaginous sheath [Drebes, 1974; Hasle and Fryxell, 1995; Booth and Smith, 1997], which would have contributed to a higher carbon content relative to nitrogen (other dominant species included the chain-forming diatoms, Frugilaripsis oceanica and Thalassiosira hyalina, 20 - 100 μm in size); (3) size-fractionated
particulate matter at the time series station during June, July, and August suggested that the percentage of nitrogen was lower than carbon in the larger size fractions (Figure 5); (4) vertical profiles of size fractions indicate that only the < 20 µm fraction approached Redfield proportions throughout the euphotic zone, while all other fractions exceeded Redfield, especially at shallow and intermediate depths (Figure 6); and (5) the average C:N ratio of POM [geometric mean (95% CI): 8.9 (8.4 - 9.6)] from May to July was not significantly different (p = 0.55) from that in August (8.9); thus elevated C:N ratios of particulate matter appear to be typical for most of the productive season.

The actual C:N ratio of phytoplankton uptake rates was probably similar to the C:N ratio of POM, because urea was likely an important source of nitrogen in addition to nitrate and ammonium for phytoplankton growth. Urea uptake was not measured during August, but it was measured from May to early July. The mean uptake rate (X ± 1 standard deviation; 0.04 ± 0.06 mmol urea m⁻² h⁻¹) was similar to the mean ammonium uptake (0.04 ± 0.09 mmol m⁻³ h⁻¹), and the uptake ratios for May to July (C:N = 8.7) were similar to the ratio for particulate matter (C:N = 8.9). If urea uptake is excluded from those total nitrogen calculations, then the uptake ratio (11.9) in early summer was not significantly different (p = 0.42) from the uptake ratio in August. Hence total nitrogen assimilation was likely underestimated in August, resulting in an overestimation of the uptake ratio.

Estimates of new production were calculated using different conversion factors prevalent in the literature, including Redfield and Takahashi C:N ratios and the ratios from the CO₂: NO₃ reduction, POM, and phytoplankton uptake rates measured during this study, to examine the variation between conversion factors (Table 2). The Redfield ratio yielded the lowest estimate of carbon export to deep water, whereas the C:nitrate uptake rates gave the highest. During August median-integrated primary production was 68.4 mmol C m⁻² d⁻¹ (range, 11.3 to 225.3; n = 44), and the median integrated rate of nitrate assimilation was 3.98 mmol N m⁻² d⁻¹ (range, 0.39 to 10.75, n = 37). The mean f ratio (nitrate uptake/nitrate + ammonium uptake) (Eppley and Peterson, 1979)) for the euphotic zone was 0.59 ± 0.26 (median 0.60), suggesting that more than half of the primary production was supported by nitrate and therefore was "new production." However, if urea uptake was similar to ammonium uptake during August, then the f ratio would be lower (0.42) and production would have been more dependent on regenerative processes.

Table 2. Range of Estimated Carbon-Equivalent New Production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversion Factor</th>
<th>New Production, mmol C m⁻² d⁻¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Redfield C:N = 6.6</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takahashi C:N = 7.6</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POC/PON = 8.9</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C:N* uptake = 8.9</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIC:NO₃ drawdown = 9.8</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources include Redfield et al. [1963] and Takahashi et al. [1985]. New production was estimated from median-integrated rate of nitrate uptake by phytoplankton (3.98 mmol NO₃⁻ uptake m⁻³ d⁻¹) and different conversion factors converting nitrogen (N) to carbon (C).

*Geometric mean of uptake rates was measured at 30-100% of surface irradiance; N is sum of nitrate, ammonium, and urea assimilation rates.

3.3. Particulate Pool: Zooplankton

The dominant Arctic zooplankton species collected in the surface layer during this study included the herbivorous copepods Calanus hyperboreus and C. glacialis; the omnivorous Metridia longa occurred deeper in the water column. In Table 1 the carbon and nitrogen content and rates measured for C. hyperboreus copepodite stage V and females were used as a proxy for near-surface copepods. On average, 54.9% of the dry weight of individuals was carbon and 7.3% was nitrogen. The molar C:N ratio of copepod body carbon to nitrogen (9.6, Table 1) was significantly higher (p < 0.001) than Redfield-Takahashi ratios, but not significantly different (p = 0.136) than the ratio for particulate matter.

The turnover of carbon and nitrogen in females (percent daily loss of body carbon and nitrogen) as a result of metabolic processes was calculated as the ratio of CO₂ released to ammonium excreted per individual. This metabolic ratio (CO₂:NH₄ = 8.8) was not significantly different from Redfield (p = 0.278) or Takahashi (p = 0.550) values and not significantly different (p = 0.617) from the body C:N ratio. Only ammonium-N excretion, however, was measured during this study. If female copepods excreted substantial amounts of
urea or amino acids, then nitrogen excretion would be underestimated. In contrast, the ratio of carbon to nitrogen egestion per individual was significantly higher ($p \leq 0.001$) than Redfield or Takahashi ratios. During our study, copepods assimilated nitrogen more efficiently than carbon [Daly, 1997] and egested a higher proportion of carbon than nitrogen in fecal pellets, suggesting that this component of sinking material was carbon rich.

Dissolved organic carbon and nitrogen excretion by *C. hyperboreus* females was estimated using a mass balance approach (Table 3). The carbon and nitrogen budget for a copepod may be described as

$$I = G + R + E$$

(1)

where $I$ is the daily amount of carbon or nitrogen ingested, $G$ is the amount allocated to growth, $R$ is the amount of carbon dioxide released or nitrogen excreted in catabolism, and $E$ is the amount egested in fecal pellets. This budget assumes that "growth" in female *C. hyperboreus* is primarily due to lipid storage because these females do not molt or reproduce during summer. Because lipids contain little nitrogen, the nitrogen requirement for $G$ was assumed to be negligible. $R$ and $E$ were experimentally determined (1.35 $\mu$mol C respired ind$^{-1}$ d$^{-1}$, 0.152 $\mu$mol N excreted ind$^{-1}$ d$^{-1}$, respectively). $I$ was estimated from $E$ and an average assimilation efficiency per individual (67% for carbon [Conover, 1966a] and 91% for nitrogen [Daly, 1997]) to be 16.3 $\mu$mol C and 1.64 $\mu$mol N ingested ind$^{-1}$ d$^{-1}$. Thus the fraction of ingested food (0.67$I$ and 0.91$I$) that was assimilated through the gut wall and available for metabolic degradation or growth was equivalent to 10.9 $\mu$mol C and 1.64 $\mu$mol N. From (1) the unused carbon and nitrogen remaining after metabolic and egestion losses is calculated to be 9.56 $\mu$mol C and 1.49 $\mu$mol N. Assuming a net growth efficiency $K_2$ of 40% [Conover, 1964], growth was estimated to be 4.36 $\mu$mol C ind$^{-1}$ d$^{-1}$, leaving 5.20 $\mu$mol C remaining for DOC excretion. Similarly, if nitrogen-based growth was negligible, then 1.49 $\mu$mol N ind$^{-1}$ d$^{-1}$ may have been excreted as DON or other dissolved inorganic nitrogen products, such as urea. On the bases of these calculations, of the carbon ingested, 8% was respired, 33% was egested, and 27% may have been used in lipid storage (i.e., growth), and 32% was excreted as DOC (or diffused from fecal pellets). Similarly, of the nitrogen ingested, 8% was excreted as ammonium, 9% was egested, and the remaining proportion of assimilated nitrogen (83%) may have been excreted as DON.

### Table 3. Mass Balance Estimate of Potential Dissolved Organic Carbon and Nitrogen Excretion by Female *Calanus hyperboreus*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>$I$</th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>$E$</th>
<th>$G + U$</th>
<th>$AI$</th>
<th>$K_2$</th>
<th>$G$</th>
<th>$(G + U) - G = U$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carbon</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>9.56</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>5.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrogen</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>0.152</td>
<td>0.163</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variables are $I$, ingestion; $R$, respiration; $E$, egestion; $G$, growth (i.e., lipid storage); $U$, organic excretion (formula used is $I = (R + E) = G + U$); $AI$, assimilated food; $K_2$, ratio of growth to assimilated food [$AI (K_2) = G$]; units are $\mu$mol ind$^{-1}$ d$^{-1}$. Numbers for carbon and nitrogen budgets from Table 1 were converted to daily rates. Net growth efficiency was measured for *C. hyperboreus* CV at 2ø to 5øC [Conover, 1964].

#### 3.4. Trophic Interactions

We also examined trophic interactions that could influence carbon and nitrogen cycling using data from the time series station located in a productive region of the polynya. Within the upper 20 m of the water column (where zooplankton and phytoplankton were most abundant), the copepod community, on average, excreted 38.6 ± 21.7 $\mu$mol CO$_2$ m$^{-3}$ d$^{-1}$ and 2.5 ± 1.7 $\mu$mol NH$_4$ m$^{-3}$ d$^{-1}$ to the dissolved pool and contributed 367 ± 250 $\mu$mol C m$^{-3}$ d$^{-1}$ and 11.5 ± 7.8 $\mu$mol N m$^{-3}$ d$^{-1}$ to the particulate pool as fecal pellets. Over the euphotic zone the integrated primary production and ammonium uptake by phytoplankton and the potential daily rate of CO$_2$ release, ammonium excretion, and carbon and nitrogen particulate egestion by life history stages of all species of copepods are shown in Table 4. Copepod respiration accounted for approximately 1% of phytoplankton CO$_2$ demand and ammonium excretion, and carbon and nitrogen particulate egestion by copepods accounted for approximately 8% of the daily ammonium taken up by phytoplankton. The integrated rate of community ingestion, estimated from the carbon egestion rate and a conservative carbon assimilation efficiency per individual of 67% [Conover, 1966a], indicated that copepods consumed, on average, 41% (range, 8 - 65%) of the primary production at this location. The integrated rate of copepod carbon egestion was 1 to 2 orders of magnitude higher than nitrogen egestion. Thus copepods, via grazing and egestion, could significantly influence the composition and elemental content of the particulate matter and the particulate flux in this region.

#### 4. Discussion

In the Arctic Ocean and its marginal seas, phytoplankton growth is strongly controlled by environmental factors, such as low seawater temperature, nutrient concentrations, and irradiance [Smith and Harrison, 1991]. Prior to the summer bloom, hydrographic conditions of surface water were dominated by cold, low-salinity Polar Water (< 0øC, < 33.0 psu [Budens and Schneider, 1995]) and low nutrient inventories (nitrate, silicate, and phosphate concentrations of approximately 4, 10 and 1 $\mu$M, respectively [Wallace et al., 1995]). During June and July, nitrate and silicate levels decreased, whereas phosphate remained at low levels. By August, temperatures in the upper 2 to 5 m of the water column in open water were > 0øC (maximum 4.6øC) and nitrate concentrations were depleted in near-surface waters where phytoplankton uptake rates were highest. Owing to ice melt and thermal
prevented the upward diffusion of nutrients from deep water to Redfield-Takahashi proportions. Our estimated accumulation across Ob Bank from the East Greenland Current [Kattner et al., 1993; Banse, 1994; Williams, 1995] and comments by Toggweiler [1993] that the dissolved organic pool was important to understanding the uncoupling of organic matter production and nutrient supply in surface waters, as well as carbon export to deep water.

The DOC: DON ratios from our study area are elevated relative to reports from other regions (e.g., C:N = 7 - 15 [Williams and Druffel, 1988; Benmer et al., 1992; Williams, 1995]), although there are few other studies for comparison. There also is increasing evidence that relatively high DOC concentrations may be characteristic of surface waters in northern high latitudes, compared to those observed at low (e.g., the Sargasso Sea and the central equatorial Pacific, 60 - 80 μM DOC [Carlson et al., 1994; Carlson and Ducklow, 1995]) or southern high latitudes (the Ross Sea, 40 - 60 μM DOC [Carlson et al., 1998]). For example, the mean (112 μM) and range of DOC concentrations (Table 1) in the surface layer measured in our study are similar to those observed in Bedford Basin, Nova Scotia [Kepkay et al., 1993]; in the Norwegian Sea [Borsheim and Myklestad, 1997]; and in the central Arctic Ocean [Anderson et al., 1994; Wheeler et al., 1996, 1997]. Our median DON concentration also is comparable to that reported for the Greenland Sea in June [Lara et al., 1993] and the Arctic Ocean in August [Wheeler et al., 1997]. A potential source for the high background DOC in Arctic waters is riverine input, but the sources and fate of DOM remain largely unknown.

4.1.1. Seasonal DOC accumulation. In contrast to the dissolved inorganic pool, the C:N ratio of the seasonal anomalies for the dissolved organic pool greatly exceeded Redfield-Takahashi proportions. Our estimated accumulation of 23 μM dissolved organic carbon in the surface layer during the productive season was consistent with that observed in the Norwegian Sea [Borsheim and Myklestad, 1997]. During our study, bacterial abundances (2 x 10^6 mL^-1) [Yager, 1996] and rates of activity [Ritzau, 1997] were generally low relative to those in temperate waters, suggesting that microbial turnover of DOC was low, which would allow a buildup of C-rich dissolved organic matter (DOM) during summer. Our results support the conclusion of recent studies [Sambrotto et al., 1993; Banse, 1994; Williams, 1995] and comments by Toggweiler [1993] that the dissolved organic pool was important to understanding the uncoupling of organic matter production and nutrient supply in surface waters, as well as carbon export to deep water.

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4.1.2. Phytoplankton nutrient limitation and species composition. Moderately elevated C:N ratios of particulate matter occurred for most of the productive season on the Greenland shelf. The average C:N assimilation ratio was higher than the ratio for particulate matter; however, this imbalance was resolved when urea uptake rates were included in calculations of the assimilation ratio. Carbon versus nitrogen uptake rates in phytoplankton (Figure 4) and vertical profiles of C:N ratios of uptake rates (Figure 3) and size-fractionated particulate matter (Figure 6), suggest that elevated C:N ratios were due to irradiance-nutrient interactions, nutrient limitation, and species composition of larger-sized phytoplankton. The average C:N ratio of uptake rates of unfraccionated phytoplankton only approached Redfield near the bottom of the euphotic zone (Figure 3). The plot of carbon versus nitrogen uptake rates indicates that low levels of carbon uptake and large variations in nitrogen uptake occurred at depths where light levels were 0.1% of the surface irradiance (Figure 4). Smith and Harrison [1991] noted that carbon and nitrogen uptake rates in polar regions are uncoupled at low irradiance, since carbon uptake saturates at higher irradiance than nitrogen, and that significant nitrogen removal occurs in the dark. Hence an unbalanced cellular uptake at low irradiance (and at depths with greater nitrate concentrations) may have permitted
these cells to accumulate additional nitrogen. Fractionated samples also showed that only small (< 20 μm) cells had relatively low C:N ratios at all depths, including those with low nutrient concentrations (Figure 6). Small cells appeared to be more efficient in assimilating nitrogen than larger cells, an observation corroborated by results of fractionated uptake experiments in the Barents Sea [Kristiansen et al., 1994].

Phytoplankton C:N ratios that deviate from Redfield also may result from nutrient deficiency due to a decrease in organic nitrogen (protein) and an increase in lipid or carbohydrate storage [e.g., Antia et al., 1963; Sakshaug and Holm-Hansen, 1977]. During our study, the ratio of protein synthesis to low molecular weight metabolites and an increase in lipid synthesis in phytoplankton during June and July provided physiological evidence that both nitrate and silicate limitation occurred at more productive stations [R.E.H. Smith et al., 1997]. Although a continuous supply of nutrients was advected into the polynya, the initial surface nitrate concentrations of source water was only about 4 μM and therefore relatively low [Wallace et al., 1995; Kattner and Budis, 1997]. As a result, nitrate limitation may have influenced phytoplankton C:N ratios throughout the productive season.

Another important factor contributing to elevated C:N ratios was the species composition of phytoplankton. Chaetoceros socialis, the biomass dominant species in productive areas, is a common bloom diatom species in northern waters and has a mucilaginous sheath [Drebles, 1974; Hasle and Fryxell, 1995]. It therefore would be expected to have a higher carbon content relative to nitrogen. In the polynya, small cells generally dominated in areas of high ice coverage, while colonial and chain-forming diatoms 10 - 100 μm in size dominated phytoplankton taxa in open water regions [Booth and Smith, 1997; Pesant et al., 1998]. On the basis of microscopic analyses and pigment data, detritus did not appear to significantly influence the particulate C:N ratio [Daly, 1997]. C:N ratios were elevated in larger size fractions owing to a lower nitrogen content, concomitant with an increase in fucoxanthin, a diatom accessory pigment, providing further evidence that diatoms were nutrient limited and had relatively high C:N ratios.

4.1.3. Zooplankton lipid storage, fecal pellets, and DOM release. In Arctic regions, zooplankton biomass usually is dominated by copepods, which have a high lipid content. On the Greenland shelf the most common species of copepods included the herbivorous Calanus hyperboreus, C. glacialis, and C. finmarchicus and the omnivorous Metridia longa [Ashjian et al., 1995]. In most other marine systems, C:N ratios for zooplankton are lower than the ratios for particulate matter and therefore lower than the Redfield ratio. Arctic copepods, however, have higher C:N ratios than copepods in lower latitudes, especially during summer when they store lipids for periods of low food availability [Blenstedt, 1986]. During our study, lipid content averaged between 51% and 60% of body weight in female C. hyperboreus, 36% and 46% in C. glacialis, and 30% and 32% in M. longa in different regions of the study area [Ashjian et al., 1995]. Thus C:N ratios greater than Redfield-Takahashi proportions are typical for the dominant zooplankton in northern high-latitude regions.

Zooplankton elemental ratios and physiology were influenced by elemental cycling by phytoplankton, and, in turn, zooplankton influenced the form, quantity, and location of carbon and nitrogen cycling between particulate and dissolved pools. Body and metabolic C:N ratios of C. hyperboreus were indistinguishable from the ratio of particulate matter, implying a strong elemental coupling between phytoplankton and zooplankton. Carbon and nitrogen turnover rates in females relative to body carbon and nitrogen were in balance, and over short timescales the carbon and nitrogen content of available food largely explained the variation in respiration (80%) and excretion (60%) rates in females [Daly, 1995]. On average, one female copepod excreted more ammonium than was assimilated by phytoplankton in 1 L of seawater (Table 1). Owing to spatial variability in abundance and low excretion rates, however, copepods probably were not the main source of ammonium within the entire euphotic zone. Copepods were more effective as a control of phytoplankton standing stock (on average, 41% of primary production consumed) than in sustaining production via ammonium excretion (8%) (Table 4). The primary source of ammonium may have been microheterotrophs, because bacterial activity was reduced [Ritzau, 1997]. Alternatively, in situ ammonium uptake rates may have been lower than indicated by the empirically derived phytoplankton rates.

The molar C:N ratio (33.2) of copepod fecal pellets, which are a common component of sinking particulate matter, was substantially higher than the ratios for other measured parameters in our study. Our geometric mean ratio also was 33% higher (C:N = 28.5 by weight) than all previous reports of C:N ratios for copepod pellets from lower latitudes (e.g., C:N = 4.9 to 19 by weight [Gerber and Gerber, 1979; Small et al., 1983; Honjo and Roman, 1978] for comparison, Redfield C:N = 5.9 by weight). High C:N ratios for copepod fecal pellets also were observed in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas of the Arctic Ocean (K. Daly, unpublished data, 1996). Collective evidence suggests that the unusually high egestion ratio resulted from C. hyperboreus ingesting food with a relatively low nitrogen content, coupled with a higher assimilation efficiency for nitrogen than carbon. Although this process has been attributed to copepods in other systems, northern high-latitude copepods appear to have achieved a higher level, possibly because the food they ingest has a relatively higher carbon-to-nitrogen content, and because these copepods have sequestered lipids, they may not need to assimilate as much carbon to support metabolic demands as copepods at lower latitudes. The following data support this hypothesis. (1) Carbon and nitrogen content of available food largely explained the variations in carbon (54%) and nitrogen (70%) egestion rates [Daly, 1997]. (2) Female copepods were most abundant at depths near the chlorophyll maximum (upper 40 m) [Ashjian et al., 1995], where phytoplankton were more likely to be nutrient deficient and therefore carbon rich. (3) C. hyperboreus most likely fed on diatoms, which were carbon rich, because abundances of ciliates and dinoflagellates were low [Bartholomew, 1988]. (4) C. hyperboreus is more efficient in ingesting food > 20 μm in size [Huntoon, 1981; Hansen et al., 1994]. Two abundant phytoplankton species, Fragilariopsis spp. and Thalassiosira spp., were 20 - 100 μm in size (B.
bores, 1983]. Urea excretion in C. hyperboreus was 13% to 9 to account for the average ratio of faecal matter (Table 3).

The mass balance calculations for female C. hyperboreus suggested that a substantial portion of the carbon (32%) and nitrogen (83%) ingested ultimately was released as dissolved organic matter (Table 3). The DOC:DON ratio (3.5) released by copepods was lower than the Redfield ratio. These calculations appear to be reasonable because the estimated ingestion rates (equivalent to about 7% of body weight and 13% of body carbon and nitrogen per day) and the respiration and excretion rates are within the range reported for Arctic copepods [e.g., Bämmstedt and Tande, 1985; Tande and Bämmstedt, 1985; Barthel, 1990]. Carbon and nitrogen egestion rates have not been previously determined for Arctic copepods, so there are no other studies for comparison. The net growth efficiency $K_2$ may be an overestimate for females, but a decrease in $K_2$ would increase DOC production. Conversely, if nitrogen "growth" occurred in proportion to body C:N (9.6), then the estimate of DON release would decrease to 67% of ingested nitrogen. Nevertheless, the mass balance estimates indicate that release rates could be substantial and that further laboratory and field experiments are warranted.

Our mass balance estimates for dissolved carbon production by female C. hyperboreus are similar to the highest rates measured in laboratory experiments, while our dissolved nitrogen estimates appear to be higher than other published rates. Female and stage V C. hyperboreus [Conover, 1966b] and C. pacificus [Copping and Lorenzen, 1980] were reported to have excreted 15% to 19% of the carbon ingested as DOC. More recently, Strom et al. [1997] reported that grazing C. pacificus females released 16%-30% of algal carbon as DOC. Part of the DOC released is in the form of nitrogenous compounds, such as urea and amino acids. Copepods are presumed to be primarily ammonotelic, with ammonium excretion accounting for 47% to 86% of total nitrogen excreted [Le Borgne, 1986]. Both urea and amino acid excretion, however, appear to be variable and may be related to food quality [Biddigare, 1983]. Urea excretion in C. hyperboreus was 13% to 23% of ammonium excretion in the Barents Sea [Bämmstedt, 1985] and 5% to 13% in the Canadian Arctic [Conover and Cota, 1985]. Given the extent of urea uptake by phytoplankton during this study, rates of urea excretion by the zooplankton community may have been similar to ammonium rates. Little is known about amino acid excretion in Arctic copepods, but 0% to 21% of total nitrogen excretion has been reported for zooplankton in other regions (reviewed by Biddigare [1983]).

Even given the uncertainties in the mass balance calculations, it appears that most of the ingested nitrogen was converted into dissolved organic matter, with possibly a small proportion into zooplankton biomass, whereas ingested carbon was allocated in the same proportion to both the particulate pool (i.e., zooplankton biomass and fecal pellets) and the dissolved organic pool. Hence elemental cycling by C. hyperboreus formed carbon-rich particulate matter but resupplied inorganic and organic carbon and nitrogen to the dissolved pool at relatively low C:N ratios. Because these herbivorous copepods did not vertically migrate during our study [Ashjian et al., 1995], all matter was excreted or egested in the surface layer. Although copepods egested a significant amount of carbon in fecal pellets (equivalent to 20% of the carbon flux from 50 m [Daly, 1997]), few copepod pellets were found in sediment traps moored near bottom [Bauerfeind et al., 1997]. It is unknown if the pellets were recycled in the surface layer or at intermediate depths, but most of the small omnivorous copepods that ingest fecal pellets tended to occur below 75 m in the polynya [Ashjian et al., 1995], which suggests that herbivore pellets may have sunk from the euphotic zone before being remineralized.

4.2. New Production and Carbon Export

The concept of new production assumes systems are in steady state (i.e., annual timescale), but marine systems typically are sampled over much smaller timescales, confounding estimates of new production and comparison among regions [Platt et al. 1989, 1992]. In high-latitude systems, production and export occur primarily during summer. Integrated nitrate uptake during our study, averaged over 20-day periods during summer 1993, indicated that production from nitrate uptake increased between May and early August, then decreased [W. O. Smith et al., 1997]. Moored, near-bottom sediment traps (adjacent to the time series station) also documented two periods when particulate matter reached the seafloor, one after the ice melted in June and the second, equivalent to 40% to 70% of the annual flux, between August and October [Bauerfeind et al., 1997]. Hence most of the annual flux of carbon from the euphotic zone occurred over a period of approximately 120 days, but with an increasing trend during most of that period.

The estimates of carbon-equivalent new production using different types of conversion factors only differed by 33% (Table 2). It is important to note that the estimates based on the C:N ratio of phytoplankton uptake rates may not be directly comparable to the other estimates, because of the difference in timescales of in vitro measurements relative to that of bulk property measurements [Platt et al., 1989]. In our study, the C:N uptake ratio that included urea, in addition to nitrate and ammonium, was similar to the C:N ratio for particulate organic matter. Urea uptake also was found to be quantitatively important in Baffin Bay, the Bering Sea, and the Barents Sea [Harrison et al., 1985; Hansell and Goering, 1989; Kristiansen et al., 1994] and therefore may be an important source of nitrogen in Arctic marine systems. The highest new production estimate resulted from the DIC:NO3 consumption ratio. Banse [1994], however, cautioned against the use of this ratio because changes in TCO2 due to biological activity are the net effects of respiratory processes in autotrophs and heterotrophs, phytoplankton consumption, plus CO2 influx from the atmosphere. Although the copepod community did not appear to substantially affect the net changes in DIC during our study (Table 4), little is known about the influence of microheterotrophs.

Given that the C:N ratio of particulate matter exceeded Redfield for most of the productive season (June - August),
this ratio may be the most reasonable conversion factor to estimate the carbon-equivalent new production for this region. This estimate of new production (35 mmol C m⁻² d⁻¹) also was similar to the estimate of particulate carbon flux (median, 36 mmol C m⁻² d⁻¹) from the upper 50 m based on thorium 234 measurements [Cochrane et al., 1995]. Both estimates are 25% higher than the Redfield estimate and are equivalent to 52% of the average daily integrated primary production during August. This percentage of export is substantially higher than the global average of 20% of primary production [Berger et al., 1988]. The 25% difference between estimates may not seem large given that the variability in measurements of nitrate uptake rates and thorium 234 flux was greater than the 33% difference among all new production estimates; however, if the Redfield-estimated new production represented a systematic bias and was applied globally, then the 25% error would be multiplicative.

There are few estimates of new production for the Arctic based on nitrate assimilation that can be directly compared; however, the daily rate of new production in the polynya was moderate when compared with estimates from a Phaeocystis bloom in Fram Strait (mean, 275 mmol C m⁻² d⁻¹ [Smith, 1993]). Arctic new production estimated using other methods varies over a wide range. For example, carbon export based on seasonal nitrate consumption (and a C:N conversion factor of 6) over the Bering-Chukchi shelf was higher (200 mmol C m⁻² d⁻¹ [Hansell et al., 1993]), and export based on sediment traps placed at the base of the surface mixed layer in the Barents Sea was lower (3.9 to 9.8 mmol C m⁻² d⁻¹ [Wassman et al., 1994]). Daily new production in the polynya was 3 to 7 times greater than recent estimates for the upwelling region of the equatorial Pacific [Dugdale et al., 1992; Murray et al., 1994] or the oligotrophic eastern Atlantic [Lewis et al., 1986] but an order of magnitude lower than estimates from eastern boundary upwelling systems [Dugdale and Wilkerson, 1992].

Our rates also were lower than estimates for coastal Antarctic waters in the vicinity of a Phaeocystis bloom (103 mmol C m⁻² d⁻¹ [Smith and Dunbar, 1999]), but similar to the daily new production estimated for the Scotia-Weddell Sea marginal ice zone (27 mmol C m⁻² d⁻¹ [Smith and Nelson, 1990]).

5. Summary

The results of our study indicate that biogeochemical processes on the Greenland coast did not operate within expected Redfield stoichiometry during most of the productive season and that the extent that carbon and nitrogen cycling was uncoupled may differ significantly from that in other regions. Although there presently is insufficient information about other systems, particularly with respect to dissolved organic pools, to test this hypothesis, several observations from this study support this conclusion. First, DOC concentrations and the C:N ratio of the dissolved organic pool was higher than those reported for lower or southern high-latitude systems but is consistent with other reports from Arctic regions, while the seasonal increase in DOC concentration was similar to that observed at lower latitudes. Second, the C:N ratio of unfractionated particulate organic matter was elevated with respect to Redfield proportions throughout most of the productive season. The particulate matter ratio was a function of nutrient concentration, microplankton cell size, and species composition. Low initial nitrate concentrations in Arctic source water contributed to the pervasive nutrient limitation and elevated C:N ratios of phytoplankton in the polynya. The dominant phytoplankton likely to form sinking particles were chain-forming or colonial diatoms that were carbon rich, based on measurements of lipid synthesis and size-fraction data. The dominant diatom species, Chaetoceros socialis, also may have a mucilaginous sheath that would contribute to an elevated carbon content. Third, the dominant zooplankton in Arctic regions, herbivorous copepods, have a higher body C:N ratio than zooplankton at lower latitudes, owing to lipid storage during summer. The C:N ratios of fecal pellets produced by these copepods are the highest ever reported. If these large pellets sink out of the surface layer, then they would substantially influence the C:N ratio of the particulate flux to deep water. In addition, copepods may release significant amounts of dissolved organic matter in the surface layer. Although these processes are not unique to northern high-latitude regions, the magnitudes of these processes interact to enhance the extent of uncoupling between carbon and nitrogen.

Overall, the particulate (i.e., particulate organic matter, copepods, and fecal pellets) and dissolved organic matter was more highly enriched in carbon relative to nitrogen, and microbial activity was relatively low compared with that in other marine systems. Mesozooplankton activities in the surface layer influenced the stoichiometry and material flow between particulate and dissolved pools in this system, primarily through grazing control of phytoplankton biomass, the egestion of fecal pellets deficient in nitrogen, and potentially through the production of substantial amounts of dissolved organic matter. Copepod-dissolved organic excretion, however, does not appear to account for the anomalous C:N ratio of the dissolved pool, and the uncoupling of DOC and DON cannot be fully explained by the present results. Presumably, preferential recycling of nitrogen and low remineralization rates by microheterotrophs must influence this pool. If the transport of dissolved organic matter to deep water is substantial, it constitutes an additional sink for carbon and nitrogen not taken into account by the concept of new production. The variability in C:N ratios demonstrates the complexity of the influence of biological processes on geochemical fluxes, which may be ecosystem specific, and the influence of different timescales over which processes occur.

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K.L. Daly (corresponding author), Division of Ocean Sciences, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Blvd., Room 725, Arlington, VA 22230 (kdaly@nsf.gov).

E. Falk, Geophysical Institute, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway.

M. Gosselin, Département d’Océanographie, Université du Québec à Rimouski, Rimouski, Québec, Canada G5L 3A1.

R. Lara, Zentrum für Marine Tropenökologie, Fahrenheitstr. 1, D-28359 Bremen, Germany.

A. Skoog, Department of Marine Science, University of Connecticut, Groton, CT 06340.

W.O. Smith Jr., Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Gloucester Point, VA 23062.

D.W.R. Wallace, Institut für Meereskunde, Universität Kiel, D-24105 Kiel, Germany.

P.L. Yager, Department of Marine Science, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602.

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