

first method, samples are collected and the concentration of DON or individual DON components are monitored over time. To measure DON flux rates using ^{15}N tracer techniques, all of the DIN forms (NH_4^+ , NO_3^- , and NO_2^-) must be removed, and the DON pool must be isolated with a high efficiency. At present, there are three basic approaches used to isolate DON—wet chemistry, ion retardation, and dialysis.

1. Wet Chemical Isolation

Axler and Rueter (1986) introduced the wet chemical approach, and various permutations have been applied by later researchers (Slawyk and Raimbault, 1995; Bronk and Ward, 1999). In this approach, NH_4^+ is removed by raising the pH slightly, thus effecting a change from soluble protonated NH_4^+ , to the more volatile NH_3 via diffusion in a heated oven (Slawyk and Raimbault, 1995) or vacuum distillation (Bronk and Ward, 1999). Nitrate in the sample is converted to NH_3 with DeVarda's alloy, with the NH_3 again removed through volatilization (Slawyk and Raimbault, 1995; Bronk and Ward, 1999). Both of these techniques can suffer from the artifact of losing labile DON as a result of base hydrolysis (Bronk and Ward, 2000). The problem in the isolation is likely the lengthy diffusion step undertaken to remove NH_4^+ and $\text{NO}_3^-/\text{NO}_2^-$ from solution. My own lab has investigated a suite of other protocols to remove $\text{NO}_3^-/\text{NO}_2^-$, including vanadium (VIII; Cox, 1980; Garside, 1982), titanium (TiIII, Cresser, 1977; Cox, 1980), and other DeVarda's alloy approaches (Page *et al.*, 1982). The breakdown and loss of DON is a perpetual concern due to the rigorous reducing conditions necessary to effect the loss of NO_3^- . For example, some researchers use diffusion in a heated oven as a way of removing labile DON before isolation of NO_3^- (Sigman *et al.*, 1997). Potential artifacts during wet chemical DON isolation and the different types of DON release rates and their calculation protocols were recently reviewed by Bronk and Ward (2000) and are not considered here.

2. Ion Retardation

The ion retardation method uses a resin (BioRad AG 11 A8) that retards the flow of charged particles. Originally developed for desalting blood samples, the resin can quantitatively remove salts, including NH_4^+ , NO_3^- , and NO_2^- , allowing DON to be isolated in the eluate (Bronk and Glibert, 1991, 1993b; Hu and Smith, 1998; Nagao and Miyazaki, 1999). Unfortunately, DOW Chemical, the company that manufactured the resin marketed by BioRad and other distributors, changed the manufacturing process of the resin such that the recently produced resin retains variable amounts of DON. This DON retention is believed to be due to an accumulation of an organic film on the resin beads during manufacturing (BioRad, pers. commun.) To overcome this problem, AG 11 A8 resin can be manufactured and purified

by buying another resin (Dowex anion exchange resin, BioRad AG1-X8) and then chemically altering it to produce AG 11 A8 as described in Hatch *et al.* (1957).

3. Dialysis

Another technique that has been considered for isolating DON is dialysis. Feuerstein *et al.* (1997) developed a method to isolate DON in freshwater samples, which uses rotary evaporation to preconcentrate the DON followed by dialysis (100-Da cutoff) to remove DIN; no data on marine samples were presented. Drawbacks of the dialysis approach are that the amount of time it takes to remove DIN (100 h for freshwater; 216 h for marine samples) is excessive, the removal is never absolute, and the risk of bacterial or N contamination is substantial. My own lab has experimented with microdialysis to desalt isolated DON before mass spectrometric analysis, but found that the pores did not maintain their integrity at high ionic strengths.

C. LITERATURE VALUES OF DON RELEASE RATES IN AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTS

DON release rates can vary widely within and between systems as reviewed in Tables IV and V. In most cases, these rates were measured using whole water samples, and the specific processes that produced the measured rates are unknown (see Section III.A).

1. Bulk DON

The mean rate of DON release is similar for both oceanic and coastal systems at ~ 40 ng-at N L⁻¹h⁻¹ though the range is large (Table IV). These rates are compared to rates of gross N uptake. Gross N uptake is the total amount of N taken up by cells regardless of whether its ultimate fate was PN production or DON production (Bronk *et al.*, 1994). This is in contrast to a net N uptake rate, which is the rate traditionally measured with ¹⁵N tracer techniques that only includes PN production (Bronk *et al.*, 1994). As a percentage of gross N uptake, DON release appears similar in oceanic and coastal environments with 41 ± 20 and $39 \pm 26\%$ of gross N uptake released as DON, respectively (Table IV). Mean rates of release tend to be higher in estuarine environments, ~ 72 ng-at N L⁻¹h⁻¹, but again the range is large. Based on the limited data available, the percentage of gross N uptake released as DON in estuarine systems appears to be lower than the other systems at $23 \pm 8\%$ (Table IV). Collectively these data suggest that DON release is a significant flux through marine and aquatic systems.

Table V
Summary of Published Release Rates of Individual Organic N Compounds
in the Field

Location	Date	Compound released	Release rate (ng-at N L ⁻¹ h ⁻¹)	Method	Reference
Oceanic					
Bering Sea	NP	Urea	73.8 ± 30.6	¹⁵ N and ¹⁴ C	Hansell and Goering, 1989
Caribbean Sea	November 1988				
Southern California Bight		Urea	11.17 ^a	¹⁴ C	Cho <i>et al.</i> , 1996
Southern California Bight (upper 5 m)	September	Urea	0.002 to 0.014 ^a	¹⁴ C	Cho and Azam, 1995
Southern California Bight (upper 5 m)	September	Urea	0.002 to 0.045 ^a	¹⁴ C	Cho and Azam, 1995
Coastal					
Long Island Sound	October 1983	Alanine	1.3 ^b	[³ H]ala	Fuhrman, 1987
Long Island Sound	October 1983	Alanine	30 ^c	[³ H]ala	Fuhrman, 1987
Long Island Sound	October 1983	Alanine	< 0.1 ^d	[³ H]ala	Fuhrman, 1987
Long Island Sound	November 1984	ala, glu, gly, ser	9.9 ^b	[³ H]ala	Fuhrman, 1987
Long Island Sound	November 1984	ala, glu, gly, ser	17.7 ^c	[³ H]ala	Fuhrman, 1987
Long Island Sound	November 1984	ala, glu, gly, ser	6.2 ^d	[³ H]ala	Fuhrman, 1987
Estuarine					
Chesapeake Bay	Spring	Urea	480 ± 200	¹⁵ N or ¹⁵ N/ ¹⁴ C	Lomas <i>et al.</i> , in press
Chesapeake Bay	Summer	Urea	670 ± 180	¹⁵ N or ¹⁵ N/ ¹⁴ C	Lomas <i>et al.</i> , in press
Chesapeake Bay	Winter	Urea	1630 ± 820	¹⁵ N or ¹⁵ N/ ¹⁴ C	Lomas <i>et al.</i> , in press
Chesapeake Bay, mesohaline	May 1988	Urea	0 to 377	¹⁵ N/ ¹⁴ C	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , 1998

(Continues)

Table V (Continued)

Location	Date	Compound released	Release rate (ng-at N L ⁻¹ h ⁻¹)	Method	Reference
Chesapeake Bay, mesohaline	August 1988	Urea	164 to 794	¹⁵ N/ ¹⁴ C	Bronk <i>et al.</i> 1998
Chesapeake Bay, mesohaline	October 1988	Urea	0 to 1478	¹⁵ N/ ¹⁴ C	Bronk <i>et al.</i> 1998

Note. Data was taken directly from tables, estimated from graphs, or obtained from the author's directly. Data are presented as mean \pm standard deviation.

^a Bacterial release.

^b <202 μ m fraction.

^c <202 μ m fraction + added (125–150) copepods.

^d <0.22 μ m fraction + added (125–150) copepods.

As seen in Table IV, the percentage of gross N uptake that can be released as DON can at times be quite high (i.e., 90%). Slawyk *et al.* (2000) contend that such high percentages of release are "impossible," though I disagree with both their assumptions and their calculations. Analogous to the release of DOC as a percentage of primary production, the percentage of release directly from phytoplankton is likely fairly low, as seen in many of the culture studies presented in Table IV. One would expect that this percentage can increase substantially, however, when other trophic levels act on the phytoplankton such as during sloppy feeding and viral infection (see Carlson, Chapter 4). Though these high rates may not be sustainable, they are clearly possible.

Rates of DON release that result from either NH₄⁺ or NO₃⁻ incorporation can be measured using ¹⁵N tracer techniques. Of the studies presented in Table IV, a higher percentage of gross NO₃⁻ uptake is released as DON relative to incubations where NH₄⁺ is the substrate in 7 of 11 cases. Vertical profiles of DON release rates vary. In the Gulf of Lions, DON release is generally higher in surface waters and lower at depth (Diaz and Raimbault, 2000). In Monterey Bay, the percentage of N released as DON increased with depth, suggesting that deeper in the water column, a smaller percentage of the N taken up is incorporated into sinking particles (Bronk and Ward, 1999). The fate of N uptake also appears to change. In Monterey Bay, the primary fate of N uptake is particle production in March but DON production in September (Bronk and Ward, 1999). These data suggest that the DON pool acts as an intermediate between DIN assimilation and the net formation of particles for export and will thus affect C flow in Monterey Bay.

In the Choptank River, a subestuary of Chesapeake Bay, rates of total DON release are significantly higher in a <202- μ m fraction relative to the <1.2- μ m plankton likely due to feeding processes associated with the larger size fraction (Bronk and Glibert, 1993b). Evidence for feeding induced DON release in the

<202- μm fraction includes a low ratio of LMW DON to total DON release, an increase in DON release rates at night when grazing tends to be higher, and a doubling of phaeopigment concentrations during the 36-h experiment, which are an indicator of active grazing. In contrast, rates of LMW DON release in the <1.2- μm plankton are not significantly different from rates of total DON release and rates of DON release decrease by over 95% in the dark, suggesting that passive release from autotrophs is a more important release process. In another study in Chesapeake Bay, the average rates of DON release are remarkably constant from season to season, although, within a diel period, there is considerable variability. DON release also often appears to decrease at night, although the difference is not statistically significant (Bronk *et al.*, 1998).

2. Urea

Urea has been shown to be excreted by chrytomonads, herbivorous marine zooplankton, oceanic and lake microzooplankton, bivalve molluscs, marine and freshwater teleost fish, and freshwater crabs (Antia *et al.*, 1991).

In the Bering Sea, *in situ* production of urea is approximately equal to the consumption of urea (Hansell and Goering, 1989). In the central channel of Chesapeake Bay, rates of urea regeneration are generally less than rates of NH_4^+ regeneration, but, at the highest rates measured, urea regeneration can contribute 100% of the phytoplankton N requirement (Bronk *et al.*, 1998). Lomas *et al.* (in press) reviewed rates of urea regeneration in Chesapeake Bay and found that mean baywide surface urea regeneration rates are highest but most variable during the fall. In the Southern California Bight, urea decomposition is significant deeper in the water column, particularly at the base of the euphotic zone, and the activity is primarily in the bacterial size fraction (Cho and Azam, 1995). These data suggest that urea is an important intermediate between sinking particles and release of NH_4^+ mediated by bacteria in the mesopelagic.

3. DCAA and DFAA

DCAA and DFAA are other important organic release products. In cultures enriched with DIN, extracellular DFAA often accumulate with the highest concentrations generally present during stationary phase (Poulet and Marine-Jezequel, 1983; Mykkestad *et al.*, 1989). Diatoms showed the highest rates of DFAA excretion during exponential growth (Mykkestad *et al.*, 1989, and references therein). The types of amino acids released from *Chaetoceros affinis* (diatom) changes during exponential growth relative to stationary growth (Mykkestad *et al.*, 1989). In cultures of *Phaeodactylum tricorutum*, DFAA accumulate extracellularly,

particularly glycine, threonine, and serine, which are all important in cellular respiration or are components of cell walls that are likely resistant to decomposition (Marsot *et al.*, 1991).

Amino acid enantiomeric ratios have also been used to infer DOM release by capitalizing on the fact that eukaryotic organisms release exclusively the L enantiomer. The DCAA in refractory DOM generally has a low L/D ratio of 3 to 4 (Lee and Bada, 1977; McCarthy *et al.*, 1998; II.C.3). Significant phytoplankton release, however, can increase the L/D ratio up to 8, making the ratio a useful indicator of new DOM production.

4. Release of DON Relative to DOC

Relatively little is known about the relationship of DOC to DON release. In general, ~5–30% of primary production is directly released as DOM by phytoplankton though the range is very broad (Baines and Pace, 1991; also see Carlson, Chapter 4). In the studies presented here, a mean of 22 to 41% of gross N uptake is released as DON, but as with DOC, the range is very broad (see Section III.C.1).

If phytoplankton maintain a C:N ratio of approximately 6.6, and they are ultimately the primary source for released DOM, then it is reasonable that the C:N of DOM release should be ~6.6 over appropriate space and time scales (see Karl and Björkman, Chapter 6). In Chesapeake Bay, combined DOC and DON release rate data indicate that recently released DOM has an approximate C:N ratio of 3.3 in May, 5.0 in August, and 4.7 in October (Bronk *et al.*, 1998). This low C:N ratio is consistent with an apparent accumulation of N-rich DON in the Bay from May to August as observed in the ambient DOC and DON pools. Carlson *et al.* (2000) reported that DON in excess of background (i.e., winter) concentrations has a C:N ratio of 6.7.

Søndergaard *et al.* (2000) performed mesocosm experiments to investigate DOC and DON accumulation under a range of conditions over time. Following an 11-day time lag, the concentration of DON increases linearly ($r^2 = 0.88–0.89$) with time in all treatments (added N, P, glucose, and various combinations of the three). The average DON production rates for all treatments, except for the high N addition treatment, is $0.28 \mu\text{M day}^{-1}$ and the released DOM has a C:N ratio of 11. In the high N addition treatment ($5\times$ the amount added to the rest of the treatments) the rate of DON production increases to $0.74 \mu\text{M day}^{-1}$ with a DOC:DON ratio of the released material of 20.

D. SOURCES OF DON: RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Clearly there is much work to be done quantifying rates of DON release and, more importantly, systematically defining the mechanisms that produce the

measured rates of release. Along these lines, a quick nondestructive means of isolating DON in quantities sufficient for mass spectrometric analysis remains one of the holy grails of marine N research. Such a method could be used to isolate DON in tracer experiments, as well as provide a way to limit analytical error in the measurement of DON concentrations in areas where inorganic N is high, such as the deep ocean. Other areas that should be a high priority for future research are linking DOC with DON release in laboratory growth experiments and in the field, quantifying the role of viruses in DON release, and defining the rates and pathways involving micro- and macrozooplankton in DON release (i.e., sloppy feeding versus excretion versus fecal pellet dissolution). Most of this latter work is fairly straightforward and doable with existing methods. Quantifying virus mediated release, however, will be challenging, particularly in developing appropriate experimental controls.

IV. SINKS FOR DON

To date, most studies of N uptake in aquatic systems have focused on DIN, and the studies of DON utilization that have been done have focused on labile LMW DON compounds (i.e., DFAA and urea), which are generally present at very low concentrations. Three main sinks for DON will be considered here—heterotrophic uptake, autotrophic uptake, and abiotic photochemical decomposition (Fig. 5). Here I present the evidence for heterotrophic versus autotrophic use of DON and

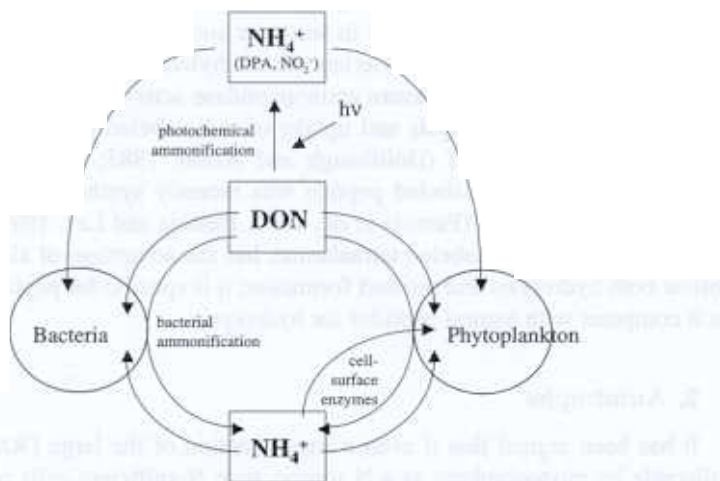


Figure 5 Conceptual diagram of processes involved in dissolved organic nitrogen (DON) utilization in aquatic systems.

the role of cell-surface enzymes, discuss a possible link between DON and harmful algal blooms (HABs), review important considerations in measuring DON uptake, and present a survey of recently published estimates of DON uptake rates. The section concludes with a review of photochemical N release and suggested areas for future research.

A. HETEROTROPHIC VERSUS AUTOTROPHIC DON UTILIZATION

Heterotrophic bacteria have traditionally been considered the primary users of DON in marine systems. Several aspects of DOM use by bacteria have recently been reviewed in Williams (2000) and Carlson (Chapter 4). Therefore, I will focus the bulk of my review on the emerging role of DON as a source of N for autotrophs.

1. Heterotrophs

Studies have shown that bacteria can utilize dissolved proteins and DCAA, and that DFAA can support a large fraction of bacterial growth in freshwater and marine systems (see Carlson, Chapter 4). Most bacteria can take up only inorganic or small organic compounds (Antia *et al.*, 1991). Therefore, extracellular hydrolysis is necessary before the bulk of the water column DON can be used for growth by these organisms (see review by Münster and De Haan, 1998). Rates of peptide hydrolysis can determine the supply of free amino acids available for uptake or extracellular oxidation. Similarly, rates of amino acid oxidation may be an important control affecting the supply of NH_4^+ . A number of methods have been developed to detect proteolytic activity in seawater and sediments, including peptide-like fluorogenic compounds such as leucine-methylcoumarinylamide (Leu-MCA), which have been used to measure aminopeptidase activity (Hoppe, 1983). Additionally, combined hydrolysis and uptake of radiolabeled proteins and peptides have also been measured (Hollibaugh and Azam, 1983; Keil and Kirchman, 1999). A fluorescently labeled peptide was recently synthesized and tested in seawater and sediments (Pantoja *et al.*, 1997, Pantoja and Lee, 1999). This compound, Lucifer yellow-labeled tetraalanine, has the advantage of allowing one to follow both hydrolysis and product formation; it is specific for peptide hydrolysis as it competes with natural peptides for hydrolysis.

2. Autotrophs

It has been argued that if even a small fraction of the large DON pool were utilizable by phytoplankton as a N source, then N-sufficient cells could exist in waters having undetectable DIN concentrations (Jackson and Williams, 1985). The role that DON plays as a N source for autotrophs, however, is still under

debate, as are the potential mechanisms of utilization—bacterial ammonification and subsequent phytoplankton uptake of the released N or direct incorporation via cell surface enzymes (Fig. 5).

Bacterial degradation of DON followed by phytoplankton uptake of the released compounds has been demonstrated by a number of researchers (Berman *et al.*, 1991; Antia *et al.*, 1991; Ietswaart *et al.*, 1994; Lisa *et al.*, 1995; Palenik and Hensen, 1997; Berman *et al.*, 1999). When the decomposition results in NH_4^+ production, the process is known as ammonification. Direct uptake of DON, without bacterial mediation, was considered to be relatively minor. Research over the past decade, however, requires that this assumption be reevaluated. A number of phytoplankton species have been shown to possess cell surface amine oxidases, which can cleave amino groups from amino acids and primary amines (Palenik and Morel, 1990a,b, 1991; Fig. 6). The resulting alpha-keto acids (from amino acids) or aldehydes (from primary amines) are released as potential C sources for bacteria. This scenario illustrates that, though studies with ^{14}C -labeled organic compounds result in transfer of the label to the bacterial fraction, these results cannot necessarily be extrapolated to include utilization of the associated amino N. Mulholland *et al.* (1998) quantified extracellular amino acid oxidase activity in natural waters from a number of oceanic and estuarine systems using a fluorescent analog of lysine (Pantoja and Lee, 1994). The highest rates of oxidase activity were observed in mesocosms during bloom-like conditions and in samples enriched with *Trichodesmium*.

The resurgence in interest in autotrophic DON utilization has fostered a return to classical culture work (see Antia *et al.*, 1991). One of the common problems with

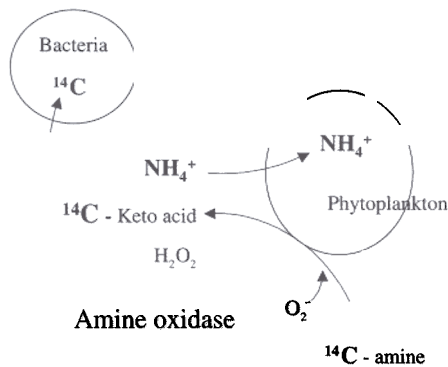


Figure 6 Conceptual diagram of phytoplankton amine oxidase activity (adapted from the work of Palenik and Morel, 1991). The enzyme catalyzes the decomposition of an amine at the surface of a phytoplankton cell resulting in the release of ammonium (NH_4^+), a keto acid, and hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2). The amine is shown labeled with ^{14}C to illustrate that in a tracer experiment, the amine will appear to be used by the bacterial fraction, while the N may actually be utilized by the phytoplankton.

much of the early culture work, however, was that the concentrations of organic N compounds offered to phytoplankton as sole N sources were much higher (at times two to three orders of magnitude higher) than the concentrations of these compounds present in the environment. Though the studies show that a suite of organic N compounds can be a N source for phytoplankton, it is believed that at the very low concentrations of these compounds present in the environment, bacteria, with their superior surface to volume ratio and uptake capabilities, outcompete phytoplankton for their use. For example, John and Flynn (1999) quantified DFAA uptake by the toxic dinoflagellate *Alexandrium fundyense* and found that, though it can use DFAA as a N source, DFAA cannot support substantial growth at the concentrations found in the environment. This study reinforces the necessity of using environmentally relevant concentrations in cultures.

Recent culture studies have shown that *Aureococcus* and *Nannochloris* sp. can grow on glutamic acid as its sole N source (Dzurica *et al.*, 1989). A host of organic N compounds, including hypoxanthine, acetamide and formamide, can also support growth in the ubiquitous coccolithophore, *Emiliania huxleyi*, although the substrates were added at 100 μM levels (Palenik and Henson, 1997). They suggest that small amides are transported into the cell and then degraded to produce NH_4^+ through the use of amide-specific enzymes. Results from other studies of *E. huxleyi* suggest that organic N use might be strain specific. For example, some strains grow well on amino acids (Flynn, 1990) while others do not (Iestwaart *et al.*, 1994). Palenik and Koke (1995) found that N starvation in *E. huxleyi* induces a cell-surface protein (NPR1) that is present when cells are growing on organic N forms (urea and purines) but not when cells are growing on DIN, raising the question of its possible role as an organic N transporter. A number of phytoplankton species from Lake Kinneret, *Pediastrum* (Chlorophyta), *Cyclotella* (diatom), and *Aphanizomenon ovalisporum* (cyanobacteria), also grow well on a number of organic N compounds, including urea, ornithine, lysine, glucosamine, hypoxanthine, and guanine (Berman and Chava, 1999). Again, however, experiments were done with 100 μM substrate additions such that relating the results to natural waters is questionable.

3. Potential Link between DON and Harmful Algal Blooms

Much of the work on DON utilization in the recent past has been tied to DON's potential as a N source to phytoplankton that can form HABs. There is increasing evidence linking DON additions with the increase in harmful algal species (Paerl, 1988; Berg *et al.*, 1997; Carlsson *et al.*, 1998). In general, diatom abundance tends to correlate with high NO_3^- concentrations (Malone, 1980; Kokkinakis and Wheeler, 1988; Probyn *et al.*, 1990), while low NO_3^- concentrations and high rates of NH_4^+ or DON addition tend to correlate with high microflagellate abundance (Probyn, 1985; Paerl, 1988; Lomas and Glibert, 1999; Carlsson *et al.*, 1998; Glibert

and Terlizzi, 1999). Dinoflagellates, in particular, are characterized by diverse nutritional strategies (Schnepf and Elbräcker, 1992; see review of mixotrophy by Caron, 2000), and a number of dinoflagellate species can use organic nutrients, such as urea and amino acids, both directly (Butler *et al.*, 1979; Berg *et al.*, 1997) and indirectly, via cell-surface enzymes (Palenik and Morel, 1990a,b; Pantoja and Lee, 1994; Mulholland *et al.*, 1998). Three toxic species that have received considerable attention are the brown tide *Aureococcus anophagefferens* (a pelegophyte), *Gymnodinium breve* (a dinoflagellate), and *Pfiesteria piscicida*.

A. anophagefferens has been prevalent along the Northeast Atlantic coast for over 15 years (Bricelj and Lonsdale, 1997). A number of studies have implicated DON in initiating the blooms (Dzurica *et al.*, 1989; Berg *et al.*, 1997; LaRoche *et al.*, 1997) with particular emphasis on urea utilization (Dzurica *et al.*, 1989; Berg *et al.*, 1997). Berg *et al.* (1997) found that organic N comprised 70% of the total N utilized, with the largest portion of N utilization supplied by urea, during an *A. anophagefferens* bloom off Long Island. In contrast, Gobler and Sañudo-Wilhelmy (2001) found that urea additions did not increase the relative abundance of *A. anophagefferens* while glucose additions did. They suggest that DON additions with higher C:N ratios than urea (i.e., amino acids or amino sugars) may be more likely to trigger a brown tide bloom. Brown tides off Long Island are found to commonly occur in drought years when NO_3^- inputs are reduced and DON concentrations are high relative to DIN (LaRoche *et al.*, 1997). Glibert and Terlizzi (1999) found that high urea levels ($>1.5 \mu\text{M}$) cooccur with dinoflagellate blooms in aquaculture ponds. *G. breve*, like other dinoflagellates, can also take up a variety of organic N compounds (e.g., vitamins, amino acids) as N sources for growth (Steidinger *et al.*, 1998). In cultures of *G. breve*, cell yields increase dramatically when glycine, leucine, and aspartic acid are added (Shimizu *et al.*, 1995). Likewise, the kleptoplastidic (when functional chloroplasts are retained from algal prey) *Pfiesteria piscicida* can use DIN, urea, and glutamate in culture (Lewitus *et al.*, 1999).

B. METHODS FOR ESTIMATING BIOTIC DON UPTAKE

DON is difficult to study as a N source because it is composed of a large number of compounds and the exact composition is unknown (Gardner and Stephens, 1978; Sharp, 1983; Antia *et al.*, 1991). As a result, measurements of DON uptake rates have largely been limited to a few compounds which have commercially available ^{15}N , ^{14}C , or ^3H tracers such as amino acids or urea (Fuhrman, 1987; Hansell and Goering, 1989; Wheeler and Kirchman, 1986; Cochlan and Harrison, 1991; Antia *et al.*, 1991). Bronk and Glibert (1993a) developed a method for manufacturing ^{15}N -labeled DON produced *in situ*, which involves incubating a whole water sample with ^{15}N -labeled NH_4^+ or NO_3^- . The recently released DO^{15}N

is then isolated using ion retardation resin (see Section III.B.2) and subsequently used as a tracer to quantify DON uptake rates. Much of the recent work focusing on the bulk DON pool used a bioassay approach, where changes in ambient and added DON are monitored over time (Seitzinger and Sanders, 1997). Bioassay approaches are particularly useful in determining the biological availability of more recalcitrant organic N compounds, such as humic substances (Carlsson and Granéli, 1993; Carlsson *et al.*, 1995).

C. LITERATURE VALUES OF DON UPTAKE IN AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTS

Consideration of organic N uptake is slowly becoming a routine part of many field programs. Here, uptake rates of bulk DON (i.e., the total DON pool), urea, DCAA and DFAA, humic substances, and other DON compounds are discussed.

1. Bulk DON

Most of the work done on bulk DON utilization has been in freshwater systems using a bioassay approach. This work suggests that 12 to 72% of the DON pool is bioavailable on the order of days to weeks. In the Delaware and Hudson Rivers, 40–72% of the DON is consumed during 10- to 15-day dark bioassays, and DON consumption results in both an increase in PN and the release of DIN (Seitzinger and Sanders, 1997). These data suggest that the bioavailable DON can be utilized within estuaries with residence times on the order of weeks to months. In systems where residence times are shorter, riverine DON will be a source of bioavailable N to coastal waters.

Stepanauskas *et al.* (1999a) measured the concentration and bioavailability of three MW DOM fractions in samples collected seasonally in Swedish wetlands. The percentage of bulk DON represented by the different fractions ranges from a mean of 23% for the HMW fraction to a low of 6% for LMW DON. They found that bioavailable DON is higher in seawater than in freshwater and that bioavailability does not correlate with the C:N ratio of the DOM. The percentage of the different fractions that are bioavailable in seawater cultures are 12 ± 4 , 7 ± 3 , 5 ± 4 , and $16 \pm 8\%$ for bulk, HMW, intermediate, and LMW DON, respectively. In additional studies in wetlands, the addition of natural DON stimulates cell-specific AMPase activity; refractory and humic-rich DOM causes a stronger stimulation than other forms believed to be more labile (Stepanauskas *et al.*, 1999b). AMPase activity is twofold higher in seawater, relative to freshwater, indicating that hydrolysis and turnover of terrestrial DON may increase when it enters the coastal ocean (Stepanauskas *et al.*, 1999b).

In two streams in Sweden, 19–55% of the bulk DON is bioavailable in short-term bioassays (Stepanauskas *et al.*, 2000). Only 5–18% of the DON is identified as urea, DCAA, or DFAA, suggesting that bacteria also utilize other organic N compounds. Potential DON bioavailability is positively correlated with the concentration of DCAA and the proportion of L-enantiomers in amino acids. In 7- to 8-day bioassay experiments in the Gulf of Riga, an average of 77% (8–136%) of the bacterial N biomass accumulation is a result of DCAA and DFAA uptake, and 13% of the DON is bioavailable during the study (Jørgensen *et al.*, 1999). Bronk and Glibert (1993a) used ^{15}N -labeled DON produced *in situ* in Chesapeake Bay and found that during the decline of the spring bloom, uptake rates of DON are higher than uptake rates of NH_4^+ and NO_3^- . In August, rates of DON uptake are again higher than uptake rates of NO_3^- , though not higher than NH_4^+ .

2. Urea

In general, phytoplankton are believed to be the primary users of urea in marine systems (Price and Harrison, 1988, Table VI). More recent studies, however, have called this belief into question (Tamminen and Irmisch, 1996). In the Thames Estuary, the addition of a broad prokaryotic inhibitor reduces dark uptake rates of amino acids by $49 \pm 20\%$ and urea by $86 \pm 25\%$, suggesting that, contrary to popular belief, autotrophs use a significant fraction of the amino acids and that bacterial uptake of urea is substantial (Middelburg and Niewenhuize, 2000). The whole water microbial community and the heterotrophic bacterial community alone appear to prefer amino acids, with NH_4^+ and urea next, and NO_3^- as the least preferred N substrate. In the bioassay study described in the previous section, Jørgensen *et al.* (1999) also found that urea uptake by bacteria can be as important as DFAA uptake.

In the Chesapeake Bay plume, urea contributes 60 to 80% of the N uptake measured throughout most of the year (Glibert *et al.*, 1991). Lomas *et al.* (in press) reviewed urea uptake rates for over a decade in Chesapeake Bay and found that urea is consistently an important N source for the plankton community, and that the highest mean baywide rates are observed during the summer.

Illustrating the close coupling between urea uptake and urea regeneration, Hansell and Goering (1989) found that urea uptake rates based on urea disappearance are an average of 140% greater than those based on rates of N accumulation in the Bering Sea. Because urea regeneration is prevalent in their samples, correcting for isotope dilution increases measured uptake rates by an average of 54%.

3. DCAA and DFAA

Bacteria are generally considered the primary users of DCAA and DFAA. As noted for urea above, changes in the size of the DFAA pool are generally small even when rates of uptake and release are substantial, indicating that uptake and release

Table VI
Summary of Published Uptake Rates for Individual Organic N Compounds and the Bulk DON Pool

Location	Sampling date	Sampling depth (m)	Fraction	Uptake rate (ng-at N R ¹ h ⁻¹)	% Total N uptake (%)	Substrates included in total N uptake	Method	Reference
Urea								
North Sea	July–August 1994	10 and 40	WW	4.9 ± 5.6	23.6 ± 17	N4, N3, U	¹⁵ N	Riegman and Noodeloos, 1998
North Sea	March–April 1994	10	WW	0.3 ± 0.3	9.9 ± 9.6	N4, N3, U	¹⁵ N	Riegman <i>et al.</i> , 1998
Straits of Georgia, Canada	July–Aug 1984	Upper 15	WW	7.37 to 25.55			¹⁵ N	Cochlan <i>et al.</i> , 1991
South Atlantic—oceanic ^d	March 1994	50% Io	WW	2.6 ± 1.4	14.0	N4, N3, U	¹⁵ N	Metzler <i>et al.</i> , 1997
South Atlantic—oceanic ^d	March 1994	1% Io	WW	0.5 ± 0.3	13.5	N4, N3, U	¹⁵ N	Metzler <i>et al.</i> , 1997
South Atlantic—inshore ^d	March 1994	50% Io	WW	55.9 ± 34.7	12.4	N4, N3, U	¹⁵ N	Metzler <i>et al.</i> , 1997
South Atlantic—inshore ^d	March 1994	1% Io	WW	21.5 ± 17.4	22.7	N4, N3, U	¹⁵ N	Metzler <i>et al.</i> , 1997
North of Antarctic Peninsula	November 1992	Surface	WW	0.5 to 1.0	5.1 to 23.6	N4, N3, U	¹⁵ N	Bury <i>et al.</i> , 1995
Bellingshausen Sea	Nov–Dec 1992	Upper 100	WW	1.4 to 9.4	5 to 21	N4, N3, U	¹⁵ N	Waldron <i>et al.</i> , 1995
Chesapeake Bay plume	February 1985	Surface	WW	7.8 to 71.0 ^b	24.7 to 57.5	N4, N3, U, DFAA	¹⁵ N	Glibert <i>et al.</i> , 1991
Chesapeake Bay plume	June, Aug 1985	Surface	WW	30 to 660	11.0 to 63.0	N4, N3, U, DFAA	¹⁵ N	Glibert <i>et al.</i> , 1991
Chesapeake Bay plume	April 1986	Surface	WW	7.5 to 139.0	8.2 to 19.2	N4, N3, U, DFAA	¹⁵ N	Glibert <i>et al.</i> , 1991

Chesapeake Bay, mesohaline	May 1988	Surface	WW	176.2 ± 68.2	8.1 ± 3	N4, N3, U	¹⁵ N	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , 1998
Chesapeake Bay, mesohaline	August 1988	Surface	WW	228.0 ± 197.8	37.1 ± 27.6	N4, N3, U	¹⁵ N	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , 1998
Chesapeake Bay, mesohaline	October 1988	Surface	WW	11.0 ± 2.9	14.1 ± 11.9	N4, N3, N2, U	¹⁵ N	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , 1998
Chesapeake Bay, mesohaline	August 1991	Surface	WW	142.3 ± 70.8	16.9 ± 7.9	N4, N3, N2, U, DO ¹⁵ N	¹⁵ N	Bronk and Glibert, 1993a
Chesapeake Bay	1973, 1988–1994	Surface	WW	24 to 332			¹⁵ N	Lomas <i>et al.</i> , in press
Chesapeake Bay	1973, 1988–1994	Deep	WW	28 to 104			¹⁵ N	Lomas <i>et al.</i> , in press
Shinnecock Bay, Long Island	July 1995	Surface	WW	3.5 to 28.6 ^c	58 to 64	N4, N3, U, lys, glu, AE	¹⁵ N	Berg <i>et al.</i> , 1997
Thames Estuary	February 1999	Surface	WW	<0.1 to 7.0	<3	N4, N3, U, DFAA	¹⁵ N	Middelburg and Nieuwenhuize, 2000
Culture of <i>Pfiesteria piscicida</i>	Low light			2.00 ± 0.90	<1	N4, N3, U, glu	¹⁵ N	Lewitus <i>et al.</i> , 1999
Culture of <i>Pfiesteria piscicida</i>	High light			7.90 ± 2.90	<1	N4, N3, U, glu	¹⁵ N	Lewitus <i>et al.</i> , 1999
			Mean ± std	63.5 ± 92.8	18.8 ± 15.4			

(Continues)

Table VI ((Continued))

Location	Sampling date	Sampling depth (m)	Fraction	Uptake rate (ng-at N R ¹ h ⁻¹)	% Total N uptake (%)	Substrates included in total N uptake	Method	Reference
DCAA								
Santa Rosa Sound, FL		Surface	B	~7.9	14.1	N4, N3, DC and FAA DNA	CC	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1993
Gulf of Mexico	April–May 1991	Surface	B	37.6 ± 35.4	46.3	N4, N3, DC and FAA DNA	CC	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1994
Santa Rosa Sound, FL	April–May 1991	Surface	B	30.7 ± 3.2	56.3	N4, N3, DC and FAA, DNA	CC	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1994
Eleven Mile Creek, FL	April–May 1991	Surface	B	55.8 ± 19.6	34.4	N4, N3, DC and FAA, DNA	CC	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1994
			Mean ± std	33.0 ± 19.8	37.8 ± 18.2			
DFAA/DPA								
Gulf of Riga	May and July	Surface	B	0.9 to 30.8 ^d			¹⁴ C	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1999
Central Arctic	July–August 1994	Upper 50	B	1.30 to 4.20			³ H	Rich <i>et al.</i> , 1997
Chesapeake Bay plume	February 1985	Surface	WW	1.0 to 3.8 ^e	1.1 to 4.9	N4, N3, U, DFAA	¹⁵ N	Glibert <i>et al.</i> , 1991
Chesapeake Bay plume	June and Aug 1985	Surface	WW	3.0 to 92.5 ^e	1.4 to 7.1	N4, N3, U, DFAA	¹⁵ N	Glibert <i>et al.</i> , 1991
Chesapeake Bay plume	April 1986	Surface	WW	2.6 to 23.1 ^e	2.7 to 4.1	N4, N3, U, DFAA	¹⁵ N	Glibert <i>et al.</i> , 1991
Shinnecock Bay, Long Island	July 1995	Surface	WW	0.6 to 7.1 ^f	11 to 16	N4, N3, U, lys, glu, AE	¹⁵ N	Berg <i>et al.</i> , 1997

Long Island Sound	May 1983	Surface	WW	10.0 ^g				³ H	Fuhrman, 1987	
Long Island Sound	July 1984	Surface	WW	35.3 ^h				³ H	Fuhrman, 1987	
Long Island Sound	November 1983	Surface	WW	3.8 ⁱ				³ H	Fuhrman, 1987	
Thames Estuary	February 1999	Surface	WW	6.0 to 150.0	3 to 93	N4, N3, U, DFAA ^j		¹⁵ N	Middelburg and Nieuwenhuize, 2000	
Santa Rosa Sound, FL		Surface	B	~39.4	70.4	N4, N3, DC and FAA, DNA		¹⁴ C	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1993	
Flax Pond, NY		Surface	B	~73.7	58.6	N4, N3, DC and FAA, DNA		¹⁴ C	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1993	
Gulf of Mexico	April–May 1991	Surface	B	5.03 ± 2.12	6.2	N4, N3, DC and FAA, DNA		¹⁴ C	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1994	
Santa Rosa Sound, FL	April–May 1991	Surface	B	4.23 ± 0.26	7.8	N4, N3, DC and FAA, DNA		¹⁴ C	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1994	
Eleven Mile Creek, FL	April–May 1991	Surface	B	4.50 ± 1.32	2.8	N4, N3, DC and FAA, DNA		¹⁴ C	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1994	
Culture of <i>Pfiesteria piscicida</i>	Low light			1000 ± 370	24.8	N4, N3, U, glu		¹⁵ N	Lewitus <i>et al.</i> , 1999	
Culture of <i>Pfiesteria piscicida</i>	High light			950 ± 400	36.7	N4, N3, U, glu		¹⁵ N	Lewitus <i>et al.</i> , 1999	
				Mean ± std	134.8 ± 317.3	23.3 ± 24.3				

(Continues)

Table VI (Continued)

Location	Sampling date	Sampling depth (m)	Fraction	Uptake rate (ng-at N R ¹ h ⁻¹)	% Total N uptake (%)	Substrates included in total N uptake	Method	Reference
Bulk DON								
Gulf of Riga	May and July 1996	Surface	B	5.8 to 56.9			CC	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1999
eastern North Pacific	June 1992	Surface	B	22.5 ± 29.2 ^k			CC	Cherrier <i>et al.</i> , 1996
eastern North Pacific	October 1992	Surface	B	65.0 ± 12.5 ^k			CC	Cherrier <i>et al.</i> , 1996
Akkeshi Bay, Japan	March–Nov 1998	Surface	B	4.3 to 15.0			¹⁵ N	Hasegawa <i>et al.</i> , 2000b
Chesapeake Bay, mesohaline	May 1990	Surface	WW	376.3 ± 65.1	55.5 ± 5.8	N4, N3, DO ¹⁵ N	¹⁵ N	Bronk and Glibert, 1993a
Chesapeake Bay, mesohaline	August 1990	Surface	WW	252.4 ± 131.1	27.7 ± 10.1	N4, N3, N2, U, DO ¹⁵ N	¹⁵ N	Bronk and Glibert, 1993a
Lake Kinneret, Israel (freshwater)	September 1997	Surface	B	44.4			CC	Berman <i>et al.</i> , 1999
			Mean ± std	114.5 ± 142.2	41.6 ± 19.7			
D-DNA								
Santa Rosa Sound, FL		Surface	B	~8.7	15.5	N4, N3, DC and FAA, DNA	³ H	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1993
Flax Pond, NY		Surface	B	~1.1	0.9	N4, N3, DC and FAA, DNA	³ H	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1993
Gulf of Mexico	April–May 1991	Surface	B	3.70 ± 0.53	4.5	N4, N3, DC and FAA, DNA	³ H	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1994; Kroer <i>et al.</i> , 1994

Santa Rosa Sound, FL	April–May 1991	Surface	B	4.50 ± 0.00	8.3	N4, N3, DC and FAA, DNA	H	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1994; Kroer <i>et al.</i> , 1994
Eleven Mile Creek, FL	April–May 1991	Surface	B	101.19 ± 12.7	41.6	N4, N3, DC and FAA, DNA	³ H	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1994; Kroer <i>et al.</i> , 1994
Mean ± std				23.8 ± 43.3	14.2 ± 16.3			

Note. Data were taken directly from tables, estimated from graphs, or obtained from the author's directly. Substrates are ammonium (N4), nitrate (N3), nitrite (N2), urea (U), dissolved free amino acids (DFAA), and algal extract (AE). Data are presented as mean ± standard deviation. When ranges are presented, the mean uptake rates were calculated using the median value in the range.

^aUnder mixed water column conditions.

^bRates received from the author.

^cRates are pmax for short-term (minutes) to 60-min incubations.

^dConverted to N using the average C:N ratio of the DFAA used (glu, gly, ser, ala), which is 3.25.

^eDFAA measured were glu, gly, ala, and ser.

^fCombined pmax rates for glu, lys, and algal extract.

^gDFAA measured were glu and ala.

^hDFAA measured were glu, gly, ala, and leu.

ⁱDFAA measured were gly, ala, and leu.

^jUsed an ¹⁵N-labeled amino acid mixture.

^kRates are for bioassays used phytoplankton extract supplied at 2× the ambient concentration of DOC.

processes are closely coupled (Fuhrman, 1987). In Long Island Sound, DFAA supply >10% of the C and N used to fuel bacterial growth, and DFAA uptake and release rates tend to be highest near noon and lowest at night, suggesting a link to autotrophs (Fuhrman, 1987). The four amino acids measured (glutamic acid, serine, glycine, alanine) can supply 44 to 131% of the calculated bacterial N demand.

In other studies, DFAA and DCAA have been shown to supply ~50% of the bacterial N demand in estuarine and coastal systems (Keil and Kirchman 1991a, 1993; Middelboe *et al.*, 1995). In the subarctic Pacific and Delaware estuary, DFAAs are used preferentially over DCAAs unless DFAA concentrations are very low (Keil and Kirchman, 1991a). In 14 bioassays performed, $51 \pm 45\%$ of the bacterial N demand is met by DFAA, with $18 \pm 24\%$ met by DON other than DFAA. In the Northern Sargasso Sea, protein is the dominant form of DON fueling bacterial production, supporting 20 to 65% of the estimated bacterial N demand in the surface (Keil and Kirchman, 1999). Middelboe *et al.* (1995) also found that DFAA and DCAA sustains up to 34 and 24% of the bacterial N demand, respectively, during exponential growth. As DFAA and NH_4^+ concentrations decrease during stationary phase, the importance of DCAA as both a C and an N source increases.

In the Mississippi plume, rapid DFAA turnover occurs coincident with rapid NH_4^+ regeneration rates, suggesting that DFAA are important substrates for bacterial NH_4^+ regeneration in the plume (Cotner and Gardner, 1993). Similar findings where DFAA turnover exceeds bacterial N demand have been observed in another study in the plume (Gardner *et al.*, 1993), in Chesapeake Bay (Fuhrman, 1990), and in the subarctic Pacific (Kirchman *et al.*, 1989; Keil and Kirchman, 1991a).

The role of DFAA as a N source for phytoplankton was reviewed in Flynn and Butler (1986) and Antia *et al.* (1991). Though laboratory studies show that some phytoplankton can grow on DFAA, uptake of DFAA by phytoplankton is considered to be insignificant in the field; as noted above, recent research on cell-surface enzymes suggests that phytoplankton use of DFAA may be greater than previously thought (see Section IV.A.2). In a salt marsh phytoplankton community, addition of organic N, including glycine, glutamic acid, and an amino acid mixture, results in increased phytoplankton growth (Lewitus *et al.*, 2000). The physiological response of the phytoplankton community to organic N additions, in the presence and absence of antibiotics, suggests that the stimulation caused by organic N additions results directly from uptake of the organic substrates and indirectly through bacterial decomposition.

The newly recognized Archaea also appear to use DFAA. In studies in the Mediterranean Sea and the Pacific Ocean near California, ~60% of the Archaea exhibit measurable DFAA uptake at nanomolar levels (Ouverney and Fuhrman, 2000).

There is increasing recognition that the utilization of DCAA and DFAA may be affected by abiotic reactions. Glucosylation and adsorption processes appear to be

important in making labile compounds more refractory. Rates of protein utilization decrease when the protein is adsorbed to submicrometer particles (Nagata and Kirchman, 1996). This is potentially a very important mechanism because the surface area of colloids in the surface ocean likely exceeds that of bacteria (Schuster *et al.*, 1998). Accordingly, a given amino acid released from a phytoplankton cell is much more likely to come into contact with colloidal material, rendering it less biologically available, than to come into direct contact with a bacterial cell. These studies suggest that competition between abiotic adsorption onto colloids and bacterial uptake can have large implications for the cycling of DOM, particularly small labile moieties such as amino acids. An estimated ~11–55% of the DFAA detectable by HPLC may be adsorbed to colloidal DOM in oceanic surface waters (Schuster *et al.*, 1998). Natural bacterial populations degraded ~92% of dissolved unprotected proteins in 72–90 h in one study (Borch and Kirchman, 1999). Protein adsorbed to or present within liposomes, designed to mimic protein that is adsorbed or trapped within particles similar to those produced by protists, however, has substantially lower degradation rates. The fecal pellets of some flagellates are believed to be similar in structure to liposomes (Nagata and Kirchman, 1992), and viral lysis can also produce liposome-like structures (Shibata *et al.*, 1997). Reduction in the degradation rates of organics associated with liposome-like structures may explain the presence of membrane proteins in the deep ocean DOM pool (Tanoue *et al.*, 1996; McCarthy *et al.*, 1998).

On the flip side, adsorption of DFAA can also make refractory organics more bioavailable. Adsorption of DFAA to dextran and phytoplankton-derived colloidal DOM results in approximately three times more efficient utilization of dextran or colloidal DOM by marine bacteria when compared to dextran or DOM without adsorbed DFAA (Schuster *et al.*, 1998).

4. Humic Substances

Humic substances constitute a large reservoir of organic C and N in both aquatic and terrestrial systems (Mantoura *et al.*, 1978). Humic substances have long been recognized for their ability to chelate organometallic substances, thereby making trace metals more available to phytoplankton (Prakash, 1971; Prakash *et al.*, 1973) and sequestering toxic heavy metals (Barber, 1973; Toledo *et al.*, 1982). Biologically, humic substances have traditionally been considered unavailable for assimilation due to their HMW and structural complexity. More recent studies of HMW organic compounds, however, have revealed that they are not as refractory as once thought (Moran and Hodson, 1994; Amon and Benner, 1994; Gardner *et al.*, 1996).

Despite these advances, the role of marine humic substances remains unclear. It has been postulated that some phytoplankton, specifically the dinoflagellates, may be able to utilize N bound to humic substances (Carlsson and Granéli, 1993).

Experiments in which natural humic substances, isolated from river water, are added to an assemblage of coastal phytoplankton reveal that growth and biomass formation are stimulated (Carlsson *et al.*, 1993). The literature suggests that the N associated with humic substances can be removed via one of three mechanisms: through microbial activity (Müller-Wegener, 1988), via excision by phytoplankton cell-surface enzymes (Palenik and Morel, 1990a; see Section IV.A.2), or through photodegradation to LMW compounds by exposure to UV radiation (Gellar, 1986; Kieber *et al.*, 1990; Mopper *et al.*, 1991; see Section IV.D).

5. Other Organic Compounds

Additional studies that measure uptake of other organic N compounds such as purines (Douglas, 1983), pyrimidines (Knutsen, 1972), and amines (Neilson and Larsson, 1980; Wheeler and Hellebust, 1981) show that though phytoplankton and bacteria can utilize these compounds, the uptake rates are quite low (reviewed in Antia *et al.*, 1991). There is still a debate as to whether D-DNA is actually used as a source of N for bacteria; D-DNA is approximately 16% N and so it has the potential to be a N source. Paul *et al.* (1988) found evidence that D-DNA is used as a source of nucleic acids for bacteria and that it is degraded to provide phosphate needed by the cell. Jørgensen *et al.* (1993) measured uptake rates of DCAA, DFAA, and D-DNA in seawater cultures, and found that D-DNA is used primarily as a source of N. When DCAA, DFAA, and D-DNA are combined, they provide 14 to 49% of the net bacterial N uptake measured in that study. Using turnover times of unidentified HMW DON, estimated with $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ data, DON concentrations, and rates of primary production, Benner *et al.* (1997) estimated that DON remineralization can support 30–50% of daily phytoplankton N demand in the equatorial Pacific region.

D. PHOTOCHEMICAL DECOMPOSITION AS A SINK FOR DON

Recent findings in freshwater and marine systems indicate that photochemical processes can effect the release of labile N moieties from DOM (Bushaw *et al.*, 1996). Numerous studies have shown that photochemical reactions occur when DOM from freshwater or marine environments is exposed to natural sunlight. The resulting photoproducts include carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, various carbonyl compounds, and likely many others (see reviews by Moran and Zepp, 2000, and Mopper and Kieber, Chapter 9). Some of these photoproducts can be lost by direct transfer to the atmosphere, while others can be assimilated rapidly by natural bacterial populations (Kieber *et al.*, 1989; Geller, 1986; Lindell *et al.*, 1995). With respect to N, we know that substances containing organic N can play an important role in the impact of UV radiation on aquatic biogeochemical cycles (de Mora *et al.*, 2000).

To date, most of the studies of N photoproduction have focused on fresh or brackish water systems (Table VII). Studies have documented the photoproduction of NH_4^+ , DFAA, DCAA, DPA, and NO_2^- (Table VII), but the process is not ubiquitous (Bertilsson *et al.*, 1999; Koopmans and Bronk, in press). DON and isolated humic substances can be a source of labile N when irradiated with sunlight, and wavelengths in the ultraviolet (UV) region (280–400 nm) produce the N photoproducts most efficiently (Bushaw *et al.*, 1996). Humic substances are likely important substrates for photoproduction because their aromaticity and color allow them to absorb UV light, making them more photochemically reactive than other classes of marine DOM. Furthermore, an estimated 50 to 75% of the N associated with humic substances exists as DFAA, amino sugars, and other N-rich compounds that are likely sources of the labile N forms produced photochemically (Valiela and Teal, 1979; Rice, 1982; Thurman, 1985; Stevenson, 1994).

In a river and bayou in Louisiana, an estimated 9 to 20% of the TON in the photic zone was converted to NH_4^+ each day (Wang *et al.*, 2000). Koopmans and Bronk (in press) measured N photoproduction from DOM isolated from surficial groundwaters. Photochemical production of NH_4^+ was observed in 4 of 5 irradiated estuarine surface water samples, but in only 2 of 13 groundwater samples. In contrast, the photochemically mediated loss of NH_4^+ was observed in 7 of 13 groundwater samples, likely due to incorporation into DOM. These data suggest that photochemical reactions may be a sink as well as a source of available N.

In a cross-system comparison, photoproduction experiments were performed in parallel with ^{15}N uptake experiments (Bronk *et al.*, unpublished data). Photochemical ammonification supplied an average of 13, 13, and 7% of the NH_4^+ taken up in the Eastern Tropical North Pacific, South Atlantic Bight, and two rivers in Georgia, respectively. When photoproduction is detected, it supplies up to 38% of the DPA utilized and up to 33% of the NO_2^- taken up. Photochemical ammonification is a relatively minor source of NH_4^+ in all three environments with rates being 2 to 6% of biotic NH_4^+ regeneration rates, measured with the ^{15}N isotope dilution technique (Glibert *et al.*, 1982). In a study in Lake Maracaibo, photochemical ammonification rates are $\sim 30\%$ of the total near surface rates of NH_4^+ regeneration (Gardner *et al.*, 1998).

E. SINKS FOR DON: RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Research on DON utilization is poised for rapid development. Some specific areas where additional study should prove fruitful would be to address questions of the differential flow of the C and N fractions of DOM in parallel. Combining the new enzymatic approaches with dual labeled substrates (^{13}C , ^{15}N , ^{18}O , etc.)

Table VII
Rates of Photochemical Release from Dissolved Organic Nitrogen (DON) in Whole Water or Various DON Fractions

Location	Date	Substrate	Photoproduction rate (ng-at N L ⁻¹ h ⁻¹)	Reference
Production of NH₄⁺				
Boreal Pond, Manitoba	June	Isolated fulvic acids	370 ± 10	Bushaw <i>et al.</i> , 1996
Boreal Pond, Manitoba	July	Whole water	150 ± 10	Bushaw <i>et al.</i> , 1996
Boreal Pond, Manitoba	August	Isolated fulvic acids	65 ± 10	Bushaw <i>et al.</i> , 1996
Okeefeenokee Swamp, GA		Whole water	340 ± 30	Bushaw <i>et al.</i> , 1996
Satilla River, GA		Isolated fulvic acids	50 ± 15	Bushaw <i>et al.</i> , 1996
Oyster River, NH		Isolated fulvic acids	320	Bushaw <i>et al.</i> , 1996
Lake Maracaibo, Venezuela	September 1995	Whole water	0 to 220	Gardner <i>et al.</i> , 1998
River catchments, Sweden	June–Aug 1996	Whole water	ND	Bertilsson <i>et al.</i> , 1999
Groundwater, Sweden	June–Aug 1996	Whole water	ND	Bertilsson <i>et al.</i> , 1999
Lake Skarshult, Sweden	July 1994	Whole water	ND	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1998
Pearl River, LA		< 1000 Dalton DOM	330	Wang <i>et al.</i> , 2000
Bayou Trepagnier, LA	August 1997	< 1000 Dalton DOM	1200 to 1700	Wang <i>et al.</i> , 2000
Bayou Trepagnier, LA	January 1999	< 1000 Dalton DOM	1900	Wang <i>et al.</i> , 2000
Skidaway River, GA	August 1995	2.8× Concentrated humics	ND	Bushaw-Newton and Moran, 1999
Skidaway River, GA	February 1996	2.8× Concentrated humics	7 ± 4.9 ^d	Bushaw-Newton and Moran, 1999
Skidaway River, GA	February 1996	28× Concentrated humics	60 ± 3 ^e	Bushaw-Newton and Moran, 1999
Satilla River, GA	October 1996	2.8× Concentrated humics	58 ± 3 ^e	Bushaw-Newton and Moran, 1999

(Continues)

Table VII (Continued)

Location	Date	Substrate	Photoproduction rate (ng-at N L ⁻¹ h ⁻¹)	Reference
Eastern Tropical North Pacific	July 1995	Whole water	5.4 ± 4.4	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , unpublished data
South Atlantic Bight	March 1999	Whole water	35.3 ± 39.3	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , unpublished data
Altamah and Savannah rivers	Mar, July, Oct 1998	Whole water	10.8 ± 15.1	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , unpublished data
		Mean ± std	350.0 ± 559.8^b	
		Mean ± std	136.5 ± 139.4^c	
Production of dissolved free and combined amino acids				
Lake Skarshult, Sweden	July 1994	Whole water	63	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1998
Production of DPA				
Skidaway River, GA	August 1995	2.8 × Con- centrated humics	ND	Bushaw-Newton and Moran, 1999
Skidaway River, GA	February 1996	2.8 × Con- centrated humics	ND	Bushaw-Newton and Moran, 1999
Skidaway River, GA	February 1996	28 × Con- centrated humics	41 ± 7.1 ^a	Bushaw-Newton and Moran, 1999
Satilla River, GA	October 1996	2.28 × Con- centrated humics	9 ± 8.5 ^a	Bushaw-Newton and Moran, 1999
Eastern Tropical North Pacific	July 1995	Whole water	6.1 ± 9.4	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , unpublished data
Altamah and Savannah rivers	Mar, July, Oct 1998	Whole water	8.7 ± 12	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , unpublished data
		Mean ± std	16.2 ± 16.6	
Production of NO₂⁻				
Coastal seawater, NC	May	Isolated humics	1.4	Kieber <i>et al.</i> , 1999
Albermarle sound, NC	May	Isolated humics	6.7	Kieber <i>et al.</i> , 1999
Marsh, NC	May	Isolated humics	1.9	Kieber <i>et al.</i> , 1999
Cape Fear Estuary, NC	May	Isolated humics	4.9	Kieber <i>et al.</i> , 1999

(Continues)

Table VII (Continued)

Location	Date	Substrate	Photoproduction rate (ng-at N L ⁻¹ h ⁻¹)	Reference
Eastern Tropical North Pacific	July 1995	Whole water	4.8 ± 4.4	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , unpublished data
Altamah and Savannah rivers	Mar, July, Oct 1998	Whole water	0.3 ± 0.9	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , unpublished data
Mean ± std			3.3 ± 2.5	

Note. Data are presented as mean ± standard deviation unless otherwise noted. ND: not detected.

^aStandard errors.

^bIncluding all data.

^cExcluding the Bayour Trepagnier data.

will likely show that the fate of the separate elements in DOM are different trophic levels (for example, see Fig. 6). It may also show that mixotrophy is more widespread than presently recognized. Along these same lines, quantifying where the DON is going, into autotrophic versus heterotrophic biomass, is extremely important to determining how these flows are modeled. Combining tracer techniques with flow cytometric sorting is one very promising way to discriminate between autotrophic and heterotrophic uptake (Lipschultz, 1995). The increasing availability of flow cytometers and the higher sorting speeds they can reach should make this approach much more widespread in the future. Finally, the long-term goal of bringing molecular techniques to bear on issues of elemental cycling is beginning to pay off. Quantitative PCR-type approaches will continue to be refined, holding out the tantalizing possibility of estimating flux rates without the perturbations inherent in traditional incubation techniques.

V. DON TURNOVER TIMES

Considering the heterogeneous nature of the DON pool, interpreting DON turnover times can be difficult. Turnover times for organic N cover a broad range from minutes for DFAA (Fuhrman, 1990) to hundreds of years for the bulk DON pool (Vidal *et al.*, 1999; Table VIII). In the Chesapeake Bay plume, DFAAs cycle rapidly with turnover times of 0.5 to 1.0 h in spring and summer and ~3 h in winter (Fuhrman, 1990). When considering the bulk DON pool, Abell *et al.* (2000) estimated turnover times, based on the surface concentrations of bioavailable TON in the mixed layer, to be 18 years when both shallow or

deep isopycnal degradation estimates are used. The residence time of DON in the surface waters of the equatorial Atlantic is estimated at 2.5 years (Vidal *et al.*, 1999). Harrison *et al.* (1992) estimated a maximum DON turnover time of 333 days (0.003 day^{-1}) in the northeastern Pacific by measuring changes in DON concentrations between cruises. Considering the enormous range of turnover times, one tends to wonder whether turnover times for the bulk DON pool really tell us much.

One danger in interpreting DON turnover times estimated with ^{15}N tracers is the convention that the shorter the turnover time, the more labile the compound. For example, Bronk and Ward (1999) found that DON turnover times, estimated with release rates measured in $^{15}\text{NH}_4^+$ incubations, are shorter than those measured in incubations with $^{15}\text{NO}_3^-$. These data imply that DON resulting from NH_4^+ uptake is more labile than that resulting from NO_3^- uptake. In reality the compounds produced and released are likely the same in both cases because the first step after NO_3^- is taken up by phytoplankton is the reduction to NH_4^+ . The lability should be the same, regardless of the substrate, because the compounds released should be the same.

VI. SUMMARY

Traditionally, DON has been viewed as a large refractory pool that is unimportant to microbial nutrition. Research over the past decade has transformed this view, however, and the DON pool is emerging as a dynamic component of the DOM and N cycles. It is increasingly included as a core measurement in field programs and sophisticated chemical analyses are beginning to define its structure, chemical properties, sources, and sinks. I have attempted to describe recent findings in each of these areas, which I summarize below.

1. Concentration and Composition of the DON Pool

The lowest DON concentrations are generally found in the deep ocean with the highest observed in rivers (Fig. 1). DON generally accounts for the largest percentage of the TDN pool ($\sim 60\%$) in most systems. Though much work still needs to be done to define the global distributions of DON, the general trends emerging are that upwelling at the equator, in both the Atlantic and Pacific, fuels DON production. The DON produced is then exported to the north and south into the oligotrophic gyres. Concentrations tend to decrease near the poles, though seasonal accumulations in spring are likely, and increase near the continental margins. Vertical profiles of DON generally show a surface enrichment, and DON concentrations tend to be inversely correlated with NO_3^- concentrations as depth increases. Concentrations of DON and NO_3^- are also often inversely correlated over time in surface waters. Recent studies estimate that up to 80% of the net NO_3^- drawdown in a number of

Table VIII
Turnover Time Estimates of Dissolved Organic Nitrogen (DON)
and Organic N Compounds

Location	Date	Compound considered	Turnover time	Units	Method	Reference
Oceanic						
Northeastern Pacific	NP	DON	0.91	Years	CC	Harrison <i>et al.</i> , 1992
Equatorial Atlantic (15S–25N)	Oct–Nov 1995	DON	0.4 to 13.2 ^a	Years	CC	Vidal <i>et al.</i> , 1999
Equatorial Atlantic (15S–15N)	Oct–Nov 1995	DON	12.7 ± 26.1 ^a	Years	CC	Vidal <i>et al.</i> , 1999
Equatorial Atlantic (35–15S)	Oct–Nov 1995	DON	2.1 to 300 ^a	Years	CC	Vidal <i>et al.</i> , 1999
Caribbean Sea	November 1988	DON	40.7 ± 10.4	Days	¹⁵ N	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , 1994
Southern California Bight	October 1992	DON	11 to 62	Days	¹⁵ N	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , 1994
Northern Sargasso Sea	July 1990, Feb 1991	Protein	0.38 to 3.42	Days	¹⁴ C	Keil and Kirchman, 1999
Northern Sargasso Sea	July 1990	Modified protein ^b	9.04 to 32.71	Days	¹⁴ C	Keil and Kirchman, 1999
Northern Sargasso Sea	February 1991	Modified protein ^b	9.04 to 32.71	Days	¹⁴ C	Keil and Kirchman, 1999
Northern Sargasso Sea	July 1990, Feb 1991	DFAA	0.03 to 0.29	Days	³ H	Keil and Kirchman, 1999
Central Arctic	July–Aug 1994	DFAA	~2.72	Days	³ H	Rich <i>et al.</i> , 1997
Coastal						
Monterey Bay	March 1993	DON	5.0 ± 2.4	Days	¹⁵ N	Bronk and Ward, 1999
Monterey Bay	September 1993	DON	8.2 ± 2.4	Days	¹⁵ N	Bronk and Ward, 1999
Southern California Bight	October 1992	DON	24 to 85	Days	¹⁵ N	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , 1994
Mississippi River plume	February 1991	DFAA	0.013 to 0.073 ^c	Days	³ H	Cotner and Gardner, 1993

(Continues)

Table VIII (Continued)

Location	Date	Compound considered	Turnover time	Units	Method	Reference
Mississippi River plume	September 1991	DFAA	0.02 to 0.14 ^c	Days	³ H	Cotner and Gardner, 1993
Santa Rosa Sound, FL		D-DNA	0.2 to 0.43	Days	³ H	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1993
Flax Pond, NY		D-DNA	0.64 to 9.7	Days	³ H	Jørgensen <i>et al.</i> , 1993
Estuarine						
Chesapeake Bay	April 1989 and 1990	DON	6.0 to 91.0	Days	¹⁵ N	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , 1994
Chesapeake Bay, mesohaline	August 1991	DON	2.0 to 6.0	Days	¹⁵ N	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , 1993a
Chesapeake Bay, mesohaline	May 1988	DON	0.27 ± 0.23	Days	¹⁵ N	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , 1998
Chesapeake Bay, mesohaline	August 1988	DON	2.01 ± 1.13	Days	¹⁵ N	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , 1998
Chesapeake Bay, mesohaline	October 1988	DON	2.53 ± 2.54	Days	¹⁵ N	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , 1998
Choptank River ^d	August 1990	DON	33.8	Days	¹⁵ N	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , 1993b
Choptank River ^d	August 1990	LMW DON	15.9	Days	¹⁵ N	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , 1993b
Chesapeake Bay, mesohaline	May 1988	Urea	0.12 ± 0.03	Days	¹⁵ N	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , 1998
Chesapeake Bay, mesohaline	August 1988	Urea	0.33 ± 0.33	Days	¹⁵ N	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , 1998
Chesapeake Bay, mesohaline	October 1988	Urea	1.00 ± 0.30	Days	¹⁵ N	Bronk <i>et al.</i> , 1998
Thames Estuary	February 1999	Urea	4.2 to 69.0	Days	¹⁵ N	Middelburg and Nieuwenhuize, 2000
Chesapeake Bay	1973	Urea	3.17 ± 0.63	Days	¹⁵ N	Lomas <i>et al.</i> , in press
Chesapeake Bay	1988–1997	Urea	1.10 ± 0.71	Days	¹⁵ N	Lomas <i>et al.</i> , in press

(Continues)

Table VIII (Continued)

Location	Date	Compound considered	Turnover time	Units	Method	Reference
Thames Estuary	February 1999	Algal amino acid mix	0.2 to 1.9	Days		Middelburg and Nieuwenhuize, 2000
Hudson River plume	September 1985				³ H	Furhman, 1990
Chesapeake Bay plume	February 1985	glu, gly, ala	0.060 to 0.210	Days	³ H	Furhman, 1990
Chesapeake Bay plume	June 1985	glu, gly, ser, ala	0.009 to 0.090	Days	³ H	Furhman, 1990
Chesapeake Bay plume	August 1985	glu, gly, ser, ala	0.017 to 0.170	Days	³ H	Furhman, 1990
Chesapeake Bay plume	April 1986	glu, gly, ser, ala	0.016 to 0.240	Days	³ H	Furhman, 1990

Note. Data are presented as mean \pm standard deviation. NP: not presented.

^a Estimated with DON concentrations and vertical flux estimates.

^b Glucosylated (i.e., aged) protein as in Keil and Kirchman (1993).

^c In general, turnover times increased with salinity.

^d Subestuary of Chesapeake Bay.

systems accumulates as DON. In the most general sense, a generic DON pool is shaping up to look like this: Identifiable LMW compounds such as urea, DCAA, and DFAA make up ~5 to 10% of the total DON pool each. Roughly 30% of the pool is HMW (>1 kDa). Of that HMW fraction, ~20–30% is hydrolyzable amino acids with the remainder being amide in form. This leaves a substantial fraction of the pool yet to be identified

2. Sources of DON

With respect to sources of DON, this review focuses on biotic water column processes that result in DON production from phytoplankton and N₂ fixers (passive diffusion, active release, sloppy feeding, and viral lysis), bacteria (passive diffusion, release of exoenzymes, bacterivory, and viral lysis), and micro- and macrozooplankton (fecal pellet dissolution and excretion; Fig. 3). Rates of DON release summarized here suggest that the magnitude of release is similar in oceanic and coastal environments but slightly higher in estuarine systems. The percentage of the rate of gross N uptake released as DON was highest in oceanic systems (~40%) and lowest in estuaries (~23%), though clearly more data are needed before these generalizations can be considered robust.

3. Sinks for DON

With respect to DON sinks, this review focuses on heterotrophic uptake, autotrophic uptake, and photochemical N decomposition. Though heterotrophs have been traditionally considered the primary users of DON, there is increasing

recognition that DON can be an important source of N for phytoplankton. The recent work on phytoplankton cell surface enzymes has provided a mechanism by which autotrophs can utilize the N associated with DON without developing transport mechanisms for a wide range of compounds. Much of the interest in DON uptake of late has been encouraged by a number of studies that have documented a link between increases in DON concentrations and blooms of harmful algae.

Rates of DON utilization vary widely across systems and even within systems. The work summarized here suggests that the large DON pool is more bioavailable than previously thought. Work to date (much of which was done in freshwater systems with dark bioassays) suggests that 12 to 72% of the DON pool is bioavailable on the time scale of days to weeks. Three key substrates within the DON pool are urea, DCAA, and DFAA. In studies where the uptake of these substrates are compared to other N compounds, urea averages 19% of total measured N uptake with 38 and 23% contributed by DCAA and DFAA, respectively.

Nitrogen photoproduction has been demonstrated in a number of environments, and it can be an important mechanism for converting DON into labile compounds available for uptake by either phytoplankton or bacteria. Photochemical ammonification has been the most studied with an average rate of $136 \text{ ng-at N L}^{-1} \text{ h}^{-1}$ with some extremely high rates documented. Rates of DPA and NO_2^- photoproduction have tended to be lower, though only a small number of studies have been done.

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