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Stream diatom biodiversity in islands and continents—A global perspective on effects of area, isolation and environment

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1 **Stream diatom biodiversity in islands and continents – a global**
2 **perspective on effects of area, isolation and environment**

3

4 **Short running title: Diatom in islands and continents**

5

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66 (Environmental Protection Agency) for providing data from Ireland.

67 **Abstract**

68 **Aim.** The species-area relationship (SAR) is one of the most distinctive biogeographic
69 patterns, but global comparisons of the SARs between island and mainland are lacking
70 for microbial taxa. Here, we explore whether the form of the SAR and the drivers of
71 species richness, including area, environmental heterogeneity, climate and
72 physicochemistry, differ between islands and similarly sized areas on mainland, referred
73 to as continental area equivalents (CAEs).

74 **Location.** Global.

75 **Major taxa studied.** Stream benthic diatoms.

76 **Methods.** We generated CAEs on six continental datasets and examined the SARs of
77 CAEs and islands (ISAR). Then, we compared CAEs and islands in terms of total
78 richness and richness of different ecological guilds. We tested the factors contributing to
79 richness in islands and CAEs with regressions. We used structural equation models to
80 determine the effects of area vs. environmental heterogeneity, climate and local
81 conditions on species richness.

82 **Results.** We found a non-significant ISAR, but a significant positive SAR in CAEs.
83 Richness in islands was related to productivity. Richness in CAEs was mainly dependent
84 on area and climate, but not directly on environmental heterogeneity. Species richness
85 within guilds exhibited inconsistent relationships with island isolation and area.

86 **Main conclusions.** Ecological and evolutionary processes shaping diatom island
87 biogeography do not depend on area at the worldwide scale probably due to the presence
88 of distinct species pool across islands. Conversely, area was an important driver of

89 diatom richness in continents, and this effect could be attributed to dispersal. Continents
90 had greater richness than islands, but this was a consequence of differences in
91 environmental conditions such as specific island climatic conditions. We stress the need
92 for more island data on benthic diatoms, particularly from archipelagos, to better
93 understand the biogeography of this most speciose group of algae.

94

95 **Keywords**

96 ecological guilds, freshwater diatoms, island biogeography, macroecology, species-area
97 relationship, streams

98 **Main Text**

99 **Introduction**

100 A fundamental ecological law that describes how the number of species increases with
101 area is the species-area relationship (SAR, Arrhenius, 1921). The SAR belongs to a few,
102 truly robust generalizations in ecology detected in a wide range of ecosystems and taxa
103 (Connor & McCoy, 1979; Rosenzweig, 1995; Drakare et al., 2006). Islands represent
104 perhaps the most straightforward study setting to explore the SAR because of their well-
105 defined area. Unlike most mainland habitat patches, islands are surrounded by an
106 inhospitable matrix for continental taxa, which cannot be colonized and, consequently,
107 cannot serve as a source of immigrants. This peculiar feature of islands inspired
108 MacArthur & Wilson to develop the theory of island biogeography (MacArthur &
109 Wilson, 1967), which has contributed enormously to modern biodiversity theory (Chase
110 & Leibold, 2003), metapopulation biology (Hanski & Gaggiotti, 2004), community
111 ecology (Mittelbach & McGill, 2019), landscape ecology (Farina, 2008) and biodiversity
112 conservation (Prugh et al., 2008).

113 Island biogeography investigates how species richness on islands varies spatially and
114 through time (Whittaker & Fernandez-Palacios, 2007). It postulates that larger and less
115 isolated islands host more species than small and remote islands because larger area
116 decreases extinction and proximity to mainland increases immigration. Larger islands
117 may also encompass more species because they provide a larger target for immigration,
118 higher habitat diversity (Lack, 1976) and have higher speciation rates (Whittaker &
119 Fernandez-Palacios, 2007). Lastly, since island age affects diversification and erosion, it

120 may also determine species richness, which tends to be the highest in islands of
121 intermediate age according to the general dynamic model (Whittaker et al., 2008, 2017).

122 In the light of this knowledge, Chase et al. (2019) recently presented a framework for the
123 ecological mechanisms underlying the island SAR (ISAR). They suggested that passive
124 sampling (i.e. larger islands passively sample more individuals and species from the
125 regional pool than smaller islands), disproportionate effects (e.g. different colonization
126 and extinction rates in larger vs. smaller islands) and habitat heterogeneity (greater in
127 large islands) would be the main drivers of ISAR. Nevertheless, the major patterns and
128 drivers of island vs. mainland SAR are still poorly understood, particularly for the species
129 rich microorganisms.

130 Given the importance of environmental heterogeneity and dispersal on the SAR (Chase et
131 al., 2019), functional groups varying in resource utilization and dispersal can have
132 different SARs (Lomolino & Weiser, 2001; Báldi, 2008; Schrader et al., 2020). For
133 example, the SAR slope was steeper for specialist than for generalist bird species
134 (Matthews et al., 2014) and functional traits related to dispersal explained the SAR
135 variation in plant communities (Schrader et al., 2020). Thus, evaluating the SAR of
136 different ecological guilds may improve the knowledge of the niche- vs. dispersal-related
137 processes behind the SAR patterns. As functional diversity may have a distinct
138 (Jamoneau et al., 2018; Schrader et al., 2020) and even stronger response to
139 environmental variation than species diversity (Krause et al., 2014; Abonyi et al., 2018),
140 the SAR for different functional groups may elucidate how community assembly
141 processes operate through space and time (Tilman et al., 1997).

142 The ISAR has been tested with larger-bodied organisms, including terrestrial arthropods
143 (Simberloff & Wilson, 1969) and reptiles (Algar & Losos, 2011), birds (Kalmar &
144 Currie, 2006, 2007), vascular plants (Kreft et al., 2008), and fish (Sandin et al., 2008).
145 However, ISAR patterns are still poorly understood for microorganisms. Earlier
146 microbial field studies that used microcosms (Smith et al., 2005), lakes (Reche et al.,
147 2005), trees (Bell et al., 2005; Peay et al., 2007) or spring ecosystems (Teittinen &
148 Soininen, 2015) as surrogates of islands, reported significantly positive ISARs in almost
149 all systems (but see Teittinen & Soininen, 2015). However, investigations on
150 microorganismal diversity in real islands at a global scale are, to our knowledge, still
151 missing.

152 Rosenzweig (1995) hypothesized that islands should have lower local and regional
153 species richness than similarly sized continental regions due to isolation (lower mass- and
154 rescue effect), but steeper SAR slopes. This is because area tends to be a more critical
155 factor for biota on islands than on continents due to its stronger effects on extinction and
156 colonization (Kreft et al., 2008). However, in an extensive meta-analysis, Drakare et al.
157 (2006) did not find evidence for steeper SARs on islands (ISARs) than on mainland
158 across multiple species groups. The SAR patterns are typically explored within
159 archipelagos due to the presence of a common species pool, allowing assessment of the
160 pure area effect. However, there are also more general models for the SAR at the global
161 scale, searching for broader influences on the SAR (Kalmar & Currie, 2006; Kreft et al.,
162 2008; Triantis et al., 2015), including differences in evolutionary history (Rosenzweig,
163 1995).

164

165 Here, we adopted a similar perspective and investigated freshwater diatom SAR at a
166 worldwide scale, given that diatoms have large distributions (Finlay, 2002) and are
167 strongly controlled by environmental conditions (Soininen et al., 2016). We compared
168 SARs, total species richness, and species richness drivers between islands and
169 corresponding areas on five continents, referred to as continental area equivalents
170 (CAEs). For this comparison, we devised a novel method based on island-mainland pairs
171 (Fig. 1), assuming that terrestrial area is a good surrogate for area of freshwater habitat
172 (see Appendix S1 in Supporting Information). The CAEs corresponded to the sampling
173 area of 18 islands. We then examined (1) if SAR slopes differed between islands (ISAR)
174 and continents, (2) whether islands showed overall lower diatom species richness than
175 CAEs, (3) if species richness of island was related to environment, spatial isolation or
176 island age, and (4) whether habitat diversity, passive sampling or disproportionate effects
177 explained the SAR. We investigated these research questions separately for total diatom
178 species richness and species richness of ecological guilds, differing in dispersal capacity
179 and tolerance to nutrient limitation and disturbance (Passy, 2007, 2016), all expected to
180 influence the SAR (Matthews et al., 2014; Schrader et al., 2020).

181 **Materials and Methods**

182 *Biological and environmental datasets*

183 In total, we included 18 island datasets (Corsica, Cyprus, Guadeloupe, Iceland, Ireland,
184 Kauai, La Réunion, Martinique, Madeira, Majorca, Mayotte, New Caledonia, North New
185 Zealand, Oahu, Possession, São Miguel, Sardinia and South New Zealand) and six
186 continental datasets (China, Finland, France, French Guiana, Kenya and USA) in our
187 study (see Appendix S2). Diatoms were sampled from hard substrates (typically stones)

188 or macrophytes, generally during the low flow period (see Appendix S2 for details).
189 Although diatoms in some datasets were collected over several years, we did not expect a
190 substantial effect of interannual variation in our study, because we were interested in
191 regional diversity patterns and included environmental variables to account for this
192 potential variation.

193 Diatoms were cleaned with acid or hydrogen peroxide. A total of 400-700 diatom valves
194 were counted for each sampling site, which is sufficient for reliable estimates of total
195 diversity (Heino & Soininen, 2005). As the number of counted valves varied somewhat
196 among the samples, we studied if this would affect our richness estimates. We estimated
197 species richness with 300 valves and tested the correlation with the observed species
198 richness. We observed a very strong relationship between the estimated and the observed
199 species richness ($R^2_{aj} = 0.98$). Also, valve counts did not differ significantly between
200 islands and continents (Cliff test difference for large dataset, $\Delta = -0.15$). We thus
201 believe that the number of counted valves has only marginal impact on our richness
202 results.

203 Diatoms were generally identified up to species level, except in some rare case where
204 some of the valves were identified only to genus level (representing less than 5% of the
205 entire dataset). Homogenization of the taxonomy among regions was performed using the
206 OMNIDIA database (Lecointe et al., 1993, updated in November 2020). To ensure that
207 we have a proper estimate of the diversity, we i) evaluated the proportion of observed
208 species compared to the size of the species-pool in each region using basic Chao equation
209 (Chao, 1987) and calculated a ‘corrected’ species richness according to this ratio (i.e. the
210 observed species richness was increased relative to the proportion of missing species

211 estimated from the species pool) and ii) calculated a genus-based richness assuming that
212 genus level identification varies much less among diatomists than species identification.
213 We then ran analyses with observed species richness, corrected species richness and
214 genus richness (see Data analyses section). In total, our datasets comprised 1967 taxa,
215 further classified into four ecological guilds: low profile (species of short stature), high
216 profile (species of tall stature, typically filamentous, colonial or branched), motile
217 (species moving freely in the biofilm) and planktonic species (species not innate to the
218 benthos but originating from planktonic sedimentation) (Passy, 2007; Rimet & Bouchez,
219 2012; Soininen et al., 2016). Contrary to motile and high-profile species, low-profile
220 species are tolerant to nutrient limitation and disturbance and exhibit wider distributions
221 (Passy, 2016), suggesting potentially higher dispersal capabilities (Heino & Soininen,
222 2006). Planktonic species may indicate important features of the sites such as low current
223 velocity and large rivers.

224 Physico-chemical data of each sampling site included pH, conductivity ($\mu\text{S}\cdot\text{cm}^{-1}$), total
225 phosphorus ($\text{mg}\cdot\text{l}^{-1}$) and water temperature ($^{\circ}\text{C}$), with the exception of Finland and
226 Possession island (with no water temperature data) and Ireland, Kenya and New Zealand
227 (with no total phosphorus data). Physico-chemical data were collected up to two months
228 before the diatom sampling. Climate data were obtained from WorldClim database at 0.5
229 minutes resolution (Hijmans et al., 2005), including annual precipitation (mm),
230 seasonality in precipitation (%), annual temperature ($^{\circ}\text{C}$), and temperature seasonality
231 (standard deviation of monthly mean temperatures). For each sampling site, we also
232 extracted elevation from the Global Multi-resolution Terrain Elevation Data 2010
233 (Danielson & Gesch, 2011) and computed terrain slope as a proxy for current velocity.

234 For islands, we determined age of formation from the literature (see Appendix S2) and
235 isolation using the isolation index of Dahl (Dahl, 1991, Gillespie et al., 2008). This index
236 (equation 1) is based on the sum of square root distances to the nearest equivalent or
237 larger island (d_i), the nearest island group or archipelago (d_a), and the nearest continent
238 (d_c).

$$239 \text{ Isolation index} = \sqrt{d_i} + \sqrt{d_a} + \sqrt{d_c} \quad (1)$$

240 *Creation of continental area equivalents (CAEs)*

241 For a reliable comparison of species-area relationships between islands and continents,
242 which are vastly different in size, we generated CAEs, comparable in size to the islands
243 by taking subsets of the continental data (see Algar & Losos, 2011) for a related
244 approach). The method used to create these CAEs (Fig. 1) was as follows.

245 We first computed the geographical centroid of each island and calculated D_{c-i} , a vector
246 representing the Euclidean distance between the centroid and each island sample site i .
247 Second, for each continent, we calculated D_{jj} the Euclidean distance matrix between
248 sample sites j . All Euclidean distances were calculated from geographical coordinates
249 expressed in a projected geographical system adapted for each region (see Appendix S2).
250 Third, we treated all continental sites as candidate CAE centroids and calculated D_{v-j}
251 representing the Euclidean distance between the candidate CAE centroid v and all other j
252 continental sites. We then computed a matrix $DD_{v-j,c-j}$ (equation 2), which represented the
253 absolute difference between i) the distance between a candidate CAE centroid and all
254 other sites in the focal continent (D_{v-j} , i.e. row of the matrix D_{jj}) and ii) the distance
255 between the island centroid and all other sites in the focal island (D_{c-i}).

256 $DD_{v-j,c-i} = |D_{v-j} - D_{c-i}|$ (2)

257 Note that the minimum value of $DD_{v-j,c-i}$ is theoretically 0, indicating that the distance
258 between a centroid and an island site i is identical to the distance between a CAE centroid
259 and a continent site j . Thus, smaller $DD_{v-j,c-i}$ equates to similar distances between an island
260 centroid and island sites and the distances between a candidate CAE centroid and
261 continental sites. We then assigned for each centroid-island site distance a unique
262 corresponding CAE centroid-continent site distance ($\Delta_{c-i,v-j}$ i.e. the minimum value of the
263 column of $DD_{v-j,c-i}$, equation 3).

264 $\Delta_{c-i,v-j} = \min(DD_{.,c-i})$ (3)

265 Then, we considered that the CAE centroid could be considered as the centroid of a CAE
266 only if at least $N=15$ of the selected CAE centroid-continent site distances $\Delta_{c-i,v-j}$ were
267 below a threshold value (θ) set to 5 km. Thus, theoretically, the number of sites in each
268 CAE could vary between 15 and the total number of sites in each island. Note that
269 because Kauai and Possession islands have less than 15 sites, N was set to 10 for the
270 creation of their CAEs. Finally, to avoid pseudoreplication within the sites of CAEs, we
271 selected for each continent-island pair only CAE separated by a distance of at least twice
272 the mean distance between centroids and their corresponding sites. Due to this procedure,
273 the size of CAEs could be, in some rare case, much smaller than the corresponding island
274 size.

275 The CAEs, corresponding to the sampling area of an island, were successfully created in
276 all continents (see appendix S3). Kenya was an exception because we were unable to
277 create CAEs corresponding to Corsica, Iceland, Ireland, New Caledonia, Sardinia, North

278 and South New Zealand, which were larger in size. Also, following our methodology, it
279 was not possible to create CAEs corresponding to the island of Mayotte in USA and
280 Finland, the island of São Miguel in Finland and USA and Possession Island in China and
281 USA because their continental sites were more spread out than the island sites.
282 Consequently, the total number of continent-island pairs for creating CAEs was 96.

283 *Randomization procedure for calculation of species richness and other environmental*
284 *variables*

285 For each continent-island pair, we randomly selected 15 sites within the CAEs and 15
286 sites within each island (10 sites for Kauai and Possession and their respective CAEs; 20
287 iterations) to achieve comparable sampling effort for islands and CAEs. For each random
288 subset, we calculated species richness as the total number of species observed among the
289 15 sites, and area from the convex hull around these 15 sites. We found that the areas in
290 islands estimated using convex hulls were good surrogates for whole island areas (see
291 appendix S4). We also calculated median values for each environmental variable for the
292 15 sites in the CAEs and islands and computed their environmental heterogeneity as the
293 multivariate dispersion of all environmental variables using the average distance of all
294 samples to the sample centroid in the multivariate space with the *betadisper* function in
295 the *vegan* package. Environmental variables used in the analyses and computation of
296 environmental heterogeneity were selected because they are known to be important for
297 stream diatom distributions (Soininen, 2007; Soininen et al., 2016). For the computation
298 of environmental heterogeneity in the Kenya and Ireland dataset, we respectively used
299 total nitrogen and orthophosphate concentrations instead due to the lack of total

300 phosphorus data (none of the nutrient concentration was used in the computation of
301 heterogeneity for New Zealand and Possession islands due to missing data).

302 *Data analyses*

303 We conducted separate analyses for CAEs and islands to examine the relationship
304 between species richness and area (SAR). We used linear mixed models (LMMs) for
305 CAEs to account for continental influences that may underlie differences in species pools
306 and the potential lack of independence among CAEs, given that multiple CAEs were
307 created within a continent (i.e. continents were included as random factors). We
308 performed traditional linear models for islands. We tested SAR with three commonly
309 used models (DeMalach et al., 2019), including power (Arrhenius model), logarithmic
310 (Gleason model) and Michaelis-Menten, and selected the best model based on the lowest
311 Akaike Information Criterion. We also tested relationships between area and the
312 ‘corrected’ species richness (according to the size of the species pool) and genus richness
313 to ensure that the sampling effort or the taxonomic resolution did not influence our
314 results.

315 To test for passive sampling, we estimated species richness from rarefaction curves based
316 on species occurrence. For each CAE and island, we pulled at random 15 sites and
317 randomly selected 130 species occurrences without replacement, thus ensuring that the
318 maximum occurrence of each species did not exceed 15. Species richness was then
319 estimated from the 130 occurrences and used to generate the SAR, which was fit with
320 mixed models for CAEs and traditional linear models for islands. According to Chase et
321 al. (2019), failure to detect SAR using this estimation of species richness would suggest
322 that SAR is caused by passive sampling only. However, the reverse is not true, and

323 significant SAR observed with this estimation of species richness does not necessarily
324 prove the absence of passive sampling (Chase et al., 2019).

325 Then, to test for the effect of area on species richness after controlling for environmental
326 variation, we first computed global LMMs for total and guild species richness and eight
327 environmental variables (pH, conductivity, elevation, annual temperature, annual
328 precipitation, temperature seasonality, precipitation seasonality and environmental
329 heterogeneity). Models were constructed using the median values of species richness as
330 the response variable and median environmental variables obtained from the subsampling
331 procedure as explanatory variables (N = 851, i.e. one value for each 833 CAEs and each
332 18 island). Prior to analyses, explanatory variables were log-transformed to improve
333 normality when necessary and standardized, but we did not treat for multicollinearity
334 here, as this does not affect the fit of the model. Second, residuals from these regressions
335 were regressed against log-transformed area with LMMs for CAEs and simple linear
336 models for islands.

337 The number of islands in our study is comparable to the number of islands in many other
338 SAR studies (see data used in Matthews et al., 2019) but admittedly not very high (N=18)
339 for a study at the worldwide scale (Kalmar & Currie, 2006). Therefore, we performed a
340 sensitivity test with our continental datasets to determine the number of CAEs required
341 for observing a significant SAR, acknowledging that the number of islands and CAEs
342 necessary to detect a SAR may be different. We used the median values of the species
343 richness and area obtained from the randomization procedure for each continent-island
344 pair (N=96), and randomly sampled (1000 times) K continent-island pairs. Each time we
345 fit the SAR with the best SAR model (logarithmic) and extracted the probability (*P*) of

346 observing a significant SAR, as well as the median values of model coefficients. We
347 varied K from 11 to 96, i.e. the total number of continent-island pairs available in our
348 dataset. We then identified the minimum number of ‘islands’ needed to observe a
349 significant SAR with our data ($P > 95\%$). We performed these analyses with both
350 traditional linear models and LMMs (e.g. assuming a common species pool).

351 We compared species richness of islands and species richness of their corresponding
352 CAEs with Cliff’s non-parametric effect size statistic (Romano et al., 2006; Tecchio et
353 al., 2016), due to the large number of data points resulting from the randomization
354 procedure (i.e., decreasing variance around the mean). We also used Cliff’s tests to
355 compare the species richness of each ecological guild between CAEs and islands.

356 To compare species richness of CAEs and islands after removing the effect of
357 environment, we computed LMMs as above but also included all the values of random
358 subsampling (x20, N=17020). We therefore used a nested design in the random factors of
359 the models, so that subsampling values are nested within each continent/island. Residual
360 richness values were then extracted from the models and compared between CAEs and
361 islands with Cliff’s tests.

362 We used linear mixed models for CAEs and traditional linear models for islands to
363 examine the relationship between species richness, environmental heterogeneity, the
364 median of all environmental variables and the median values of latitude and longitude.
365 Environmental explanatory variables were log-transformed to improve normality when
366 necessary and we run separate regression models with each environmental factor and
367 species richness to avoid multicollinearity. We also tested for non-linear relationships
368 separately with all environmental variables with the same procedure.

369 Finally, to disentangle the possible drivers of the SAR for continents, we implemented
370 piecewise structural equation modeling (SEM, Lefcheck, 2016) using linear mixed
371 models with continental dataset as a random factor. We could not implement such models
372 for islands due to an insufficient number of data points. We assumed an *a priori* model
373 (Fig. 2) predicting species richness as directly influenced by area, environmental
374 heterogeneity (as defined above), local environmental conditions and climatic conditions.
375 We used conductivity and elevation as predictors of local conditions, temperature
376 seasonality and annual precipitations as predictors of climate, as they were significant
377 predictors of species richness in global LMMs and exhibited low collinearity in pairwise
378 correlations tests (see Appendix S5). We assumed that the effect of area on species
379 richness could also be indirect through environmental heterogeneity, according to the
380 habitat diversity hypothesis (Lack, 1976). Finally, we also assumed that temperature
381 seasonality and precipitation are directly influenced by elevation. We included a
382 correlation between temperature seasonality and precipitation as well as between
383 conductivity and precipitation (see Appendix S5). We used the Fisher's *C* statistic to test
384 the consistency of the theoretical model with the data. All analyses were run for total
385 richness and separately for richness of each ecological guild.

386 All analyses were conducted with R (R Core Team, 2019) using packages 'vegan'
387 (Oksanen et al., 2019), 'spatstat' (Baddeley et al., 2015), 'raster' (Hijmans, 2019), 'sf'
388 (Pebesma, 2018), 'lmerTest' (Kuznetsova et al., 2017), 'lme4' (Bates et al., 2015),
389 'effsize' (Torchiano, 2020) and 'piecewiseSEM' (Lefcheck, 2016).

390 **Results**

391 *SAR patterns*

392 We found a significant positive SAR for total species richness in CAEs, but not in islands
393 (Fig. 3a). The best model describing the SAR in CAEs was the logarithmic model (see
394 Appendix S6). The observed R^2 values were relatively low compared to values usually
395 observed for islands but comparable to those found in continental areas (Kreft et al.,
396 2008). Similar results emerged with rarefied richness (see Appendix S7), ‘corrected’
397 species richness given the size of the species pool (see Appendix S8), genus richness (see
398 Appendix S9) and also after removing the effect of environmental variation (see
399 Appendix S10).

400 The sensitivity analysis revealed that a minimum of 52 continent-islands pairs is needed
401 to observe a significant SAR with our data. This number dropped to 16 when using mixed
402 models with continent (a surrogate for the species pool) as a random effect (see Appendix
403 S11).

404 About half of the 1967 identified species belonged to the motile guild (see Appendix
405 S12), followed by the high profile and low-profile guilds. Planktonic species and species
406 with variable guilds represented a minor part of the communities. Species richness within
407 all guilds was significantly and positively related to area in CAEs (Fig. 3b-e) and this
408 relationship persisted for all but the high-profile guild after controlling for the
409 environment (see Appendix S10).

410 *Comparison of species richness of islands and CAEs*

411 Overall, species richness was significantly lower in the islands than in the respective
412 CAEs for more than 50% of all continent-island pairs ($N = 96$) (Fig. 5a). Similar results

413 emerged for the guilds, especially for the planktonic guild, where over 70% of the
414 comparisons had significantly higher species richness in CAEs. The only exception was
415 the low-profile guild whose species richness tended to be higher in islands (ca. 60%).
416 Importantly, however, when environmental variation was accounted for, the species
417 richness differences between CAEs and islands disappeared in more than 80% of cases
418 (Fig. 5b).

419 *Ecological variables driving species richness*

420 In islands, we found significant relationships between species richness and isolation for
421 total, low profile species richness (U-shaped pattern) and planktonic guild (negative
422 linear pattern and a weak non-linear pattern) (Fig. 4, see Appendix S13). There was no
423 relationship between richness and age of island for the total community or any of the
424 ecological guilds (see Appendix S13). Apart from isolation, total species richness in
425 islands was significantly related only to phosphorus concentration. Species richness of
426 guilds was also significantly related to some other environmental variables depending on
427 the guild considered (see Appendix S13).

428 Total species richness in CAEs was significantly related to environmental heterogeneity,
429 pH, conductivity, phosphorus concentration, all climatic variables and longitude (see
430 Appendix S13). The piecewise SEM models (Lefcheck, 2016) disentangled the effects of
431 the influencing factors and demonstrated that diatom species richness in CAEs was
432 related to area, habitat heterogeneity, physicochemistry, elevation, and climate. The data
433 fitted well the *a priori* model (Fig. 6) for total species richness and species richness of all
434 ecological guilds. The marginal R^2 (variance explained by the fixed effects only) for total
435 species richness was 0.71 and varied between 0.14 (for low-profile species) to 0.59 (for

436 motile species). In the SEMs, area explained species richness independently, without any
437 indirect effect through environmental heterogeneity, except for the motile species
438 richness where the effect of environmental heterogeneity was negative. Indeed, total
439 species richness and richness of the motile guild were mainly driven by area and
440 temperature seasonality (Fig. 6a, d). Low-profile species richness was only explained by
441 area and precipitation (Fig. 6b). High-profile species richness was mainly explained by
442 area, elevation and conductivity, while climate had no direct effect (Fig. 6c). Finally,
443 planktonic species richness was solely determined by elevation and was thus the only
444 group without a significant relationship with area.

445 **Discussion**

446 Here, we conducted the first comparative analysis of island vs. mainland species-area
447 relationship for microbes, providing insight into the roles of area, environmental
448 heterogeneity, isolation and island age on species richness patterns. We showed for
449 freshwater diatoms that: (i) there was a significant SAR in continents but not in islands
450 (except for high profile), (ii) regional species richness was higher in continents than in
451 islands, but this difference was explained entirely by environmental conditions (iii) the
452 effect of isolation varied among diatom guilds and (iv) area and median environmental
453 conditions but not environmental heterogeneity were significant predictors of diatom
454 richness. Next, we will discuss the main findings in more detail and highlight our major
455 conclusions about total community and guild richness.

456 *Drivers of species richness in islands*

457 The lack of a significant SAR in islands may be due to low sample size ($N = 18$) or may
458 represent a real biogeographical pattern. Sensitivity analyses performed for CAEs

459 revealed that 16 islands are needed to detect a SAR given a common species pool. This
460 result is consistent with numerous studies on other organisms, reporting ISAR for a
461 relatively small number of islands within archipelagos (Matthews et al., 2019). However,
462 at a global scale, a much higher number of islands (N=52, Appendix S11) may be
463 required for detection of diatom ISAR.

464 The absence of diatom ISAR may have evolutionary and ecological causes. First, diatoms
465 may have distinct species pools across the globe (Soininen et al., 2016) and differences in
466 island area may not be sufficient to predict richness on islands that differ greatly in
467 species pool. As the size of the species pool influences the shape of the SAR (Catano et
468 al., 2021), future analyses on archipelagos will be essential for determining whether
469 ISAR exists for diatoms (but see Jüttner et al., 2018). Second, environmental
470 heterogeneity, which increased with island size (Fig. 3, and see Appendix S5) and is
471 recognized as an important driver of SAR (Lack, 1976; Chase et al., 2019), had no direct
472 impact on island species richness. Third, island richness was related only to total
473 phosphorus, suggesting that productivity is a key factor explaining island diatom species
474 richness at this scale. Note however, that due to data availability, only phosphorus
475 concentration was considered as a resource factor for explaining species richness. The
476 consideration of other nutrient resources, known to influence diatom diversity (e.g.
477 nitrogen, iron, Passy, 2007, Soininen, 2007), may improve the understanding of diatoms
478 species richness in islands.

479 We found that isolation might have some effect on species richness in islands. Two of the
480 most isolated islands (Oahu and New Caledonia) actually showed high species richness,
481 resulting in a U-shaped relationship between species richness and isolation for total and

482 low-profile species richness. Oahu and New Caledonia still had the highest species
483 richness when the latter is corrected by species pool but the U-shaped relationship is only
484 marginally significant ($p = 0.09$, see Appendix S8). Greater speciation in the most
485 isolated islands, which have many endemic species, e.g. New Caledonia has been dubbed
486 “Galapagos of diatoms” (Moser et al., 1998), may explain their higher richness
487 considering that endemic and total species richness are typically correlated (Kallimanis et
488 al., 2010). We could, however, not exclude the fact that some other unmeasured
489 environmental factors, particularly related to islands conditions, may also be responsible
490 for this pattern. Finally, our finding further suggests that the biogeographical drivers of
491 diatom richness on real islands are trait dependent.

492 Following Rosenzweig (1995), we hypothesized that islands would harbour lower species
493 richness than continents due to diminished dispersal and rescue effects. While species
494 richness was indeed lower in islands compared to continents, this difference disappeared
495 when we accounted for environmental differences. Thus, annual precipitation, higher in
496 islands than continents, was associated with lower species richness (see Appendix S10),
497 likely because of its positive effect on current velocity, and subsequently, shear stress
498 (Heino & Soininen, 2007).

499 *Drivers of species richness in continents*

500 We tested whether SARs in continents could result from passive sampling and
501 environmental heterogeneity, which are major drivers of the SAR (Lack, 1976;
502 Rosenzweig, 1995; Stein et al., 2014; Chase et al., 2019). Surprisingly, species richness
503 in continents was not directly explained by environmental heterogeneity in the SEM.

504 Although area was strongly related to environmental heterogeneity (but poorly related to
505 other environmental variables, see Appendix S5), none of the SEM models showed a
506 direct effect of habitat heterogeneity on either total or guild species richness, except for
507 motile species. For the latter, the direct effect of habitat heterogeneity was negative,
508 contrary to the results observed in univariate regressions (see Appendix 13) due to the
509 strong collinearity between area and heterogeneity. Given that we still observed a
510 significant SAR with species richness estimated from the rarefaction curves, passive
511 sampling cannot be completely ruled out (Chase et al., 2019). However, the impact of
512 area on richness in continents might also be due to disproportionate effects, including
513 dispersal, extinction and speciation. While extinction and speciation have been less
514 studied in diatoms, dispersal and mass effects (whereby species maintain their presence
515 in unfavorable conditions via immigration, Shmida & Wilson, 1985) were shown to have
516 a notable influence on regional to subcontinental diatom communities (Soininen, 2007;
517 Jamoneau et al., 2018; Lebourcher et al., 2020). For continental diatoms, larger areas may
518 thus increase the probability of immigration from the surrounding landscape, particularly
519 for species with high dispersal capabilities (mass-effect species), thereby increasing
520 CAE's diversity.

521 Environmental factors, such as nutrients, climate and elevation, were also important
522 predictors of total and guild species richness. Total species richness decreased with
523 temperature seasonality, as did the species richness of motile species, which represented
524 ca. 50% of the whole community (see Appendix S12). As motile species are generally
525 warm-water species (Pound et al., 2021) and high seasonality occurs in colder areas, it is
526 possible that motile guild richness was limited by unfavorable temperatures. Species

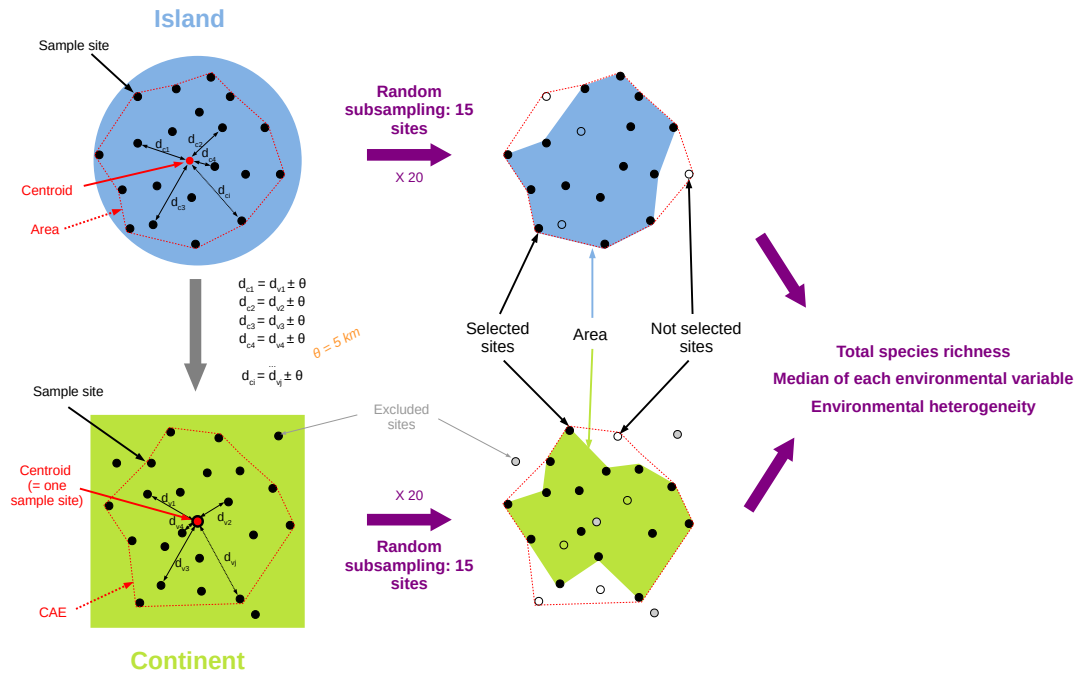
527 richness of the high profile and planktonic guilds was the lowest at high elevation. For
528 high-profile species, high elevation is stressful due to increased current velocity and
529 probability for dislodgement. For planktonic species, high elevations do not provide
530 sufficient habitat, given that these species require large water bodies. Species richness of
531 the low-profile guild is positively influenced by annual precipitation probably because
532 this guild is tolerant to physical disturbance (Passy, 2007), which should increase its
533 richness in the community.

534 **Conclusions**

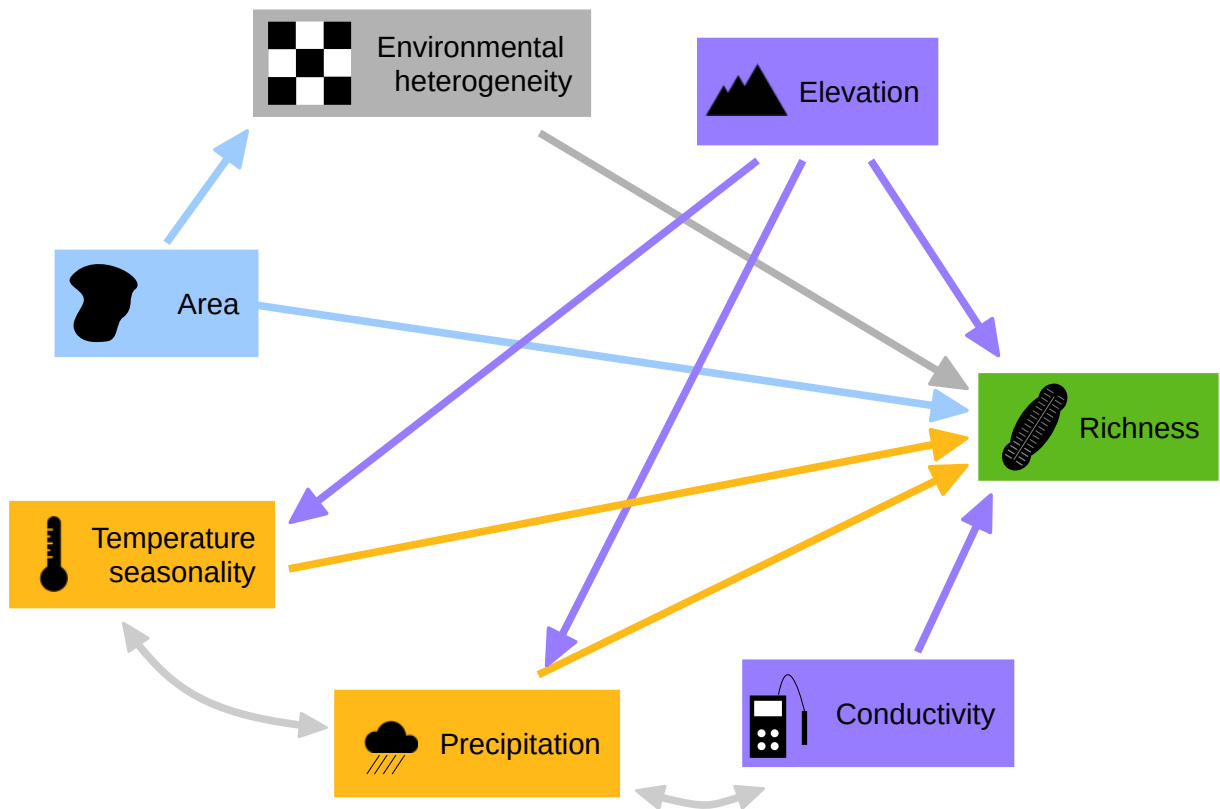
535 We examined diatom ISARs and compared them with the SARs of similarly sized
536 continental area equivalent across five continents. Contrary to most previous studies, we
537 did not find significant ISAR for total species richness but detected significant
538 relationships of richness with total phosphorus. These results imply that diatom richness
539 in islands is not related to area but is controlled by productivity. However, the lack of
540 ISAR may be due to distinct species pool across islands in our study. Species richness
541 was typically higher in continental areas than in similarly sized islands, most probably
542 due to differences in climate and related environmental conditions, such as current
543 velocity. The significant SAR for continents may originate from disproportionate effects,
544 such as mass effect, but not from environmental heterogeneity. Isolation influenced the
545 richness of the whole community and some diatom guilds in islands. These finding
546 indicate that there are important differences in richness responses to island properties
547 among ecological guilds and between the community level and the functional level.
548 Finally, the proposed new method for species-area comparisons between islands and
549 continental area equivalents will advance research on biogeography of islands vs.

550 mainland. We advocate obtaining global diatom data, particularly from archipelagos to
551 better understand the drivers of island species diversity.

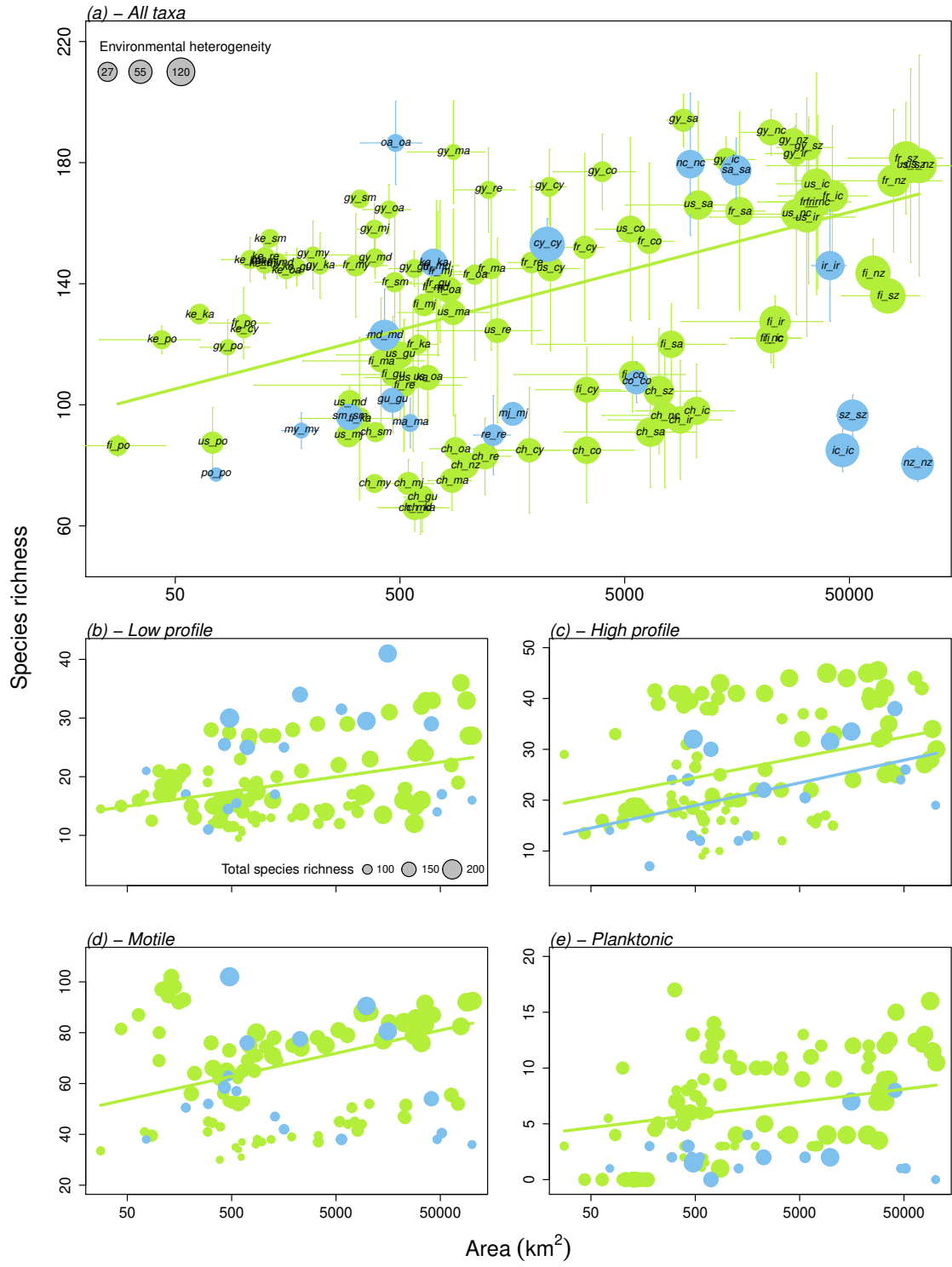
552 **Figures legend**



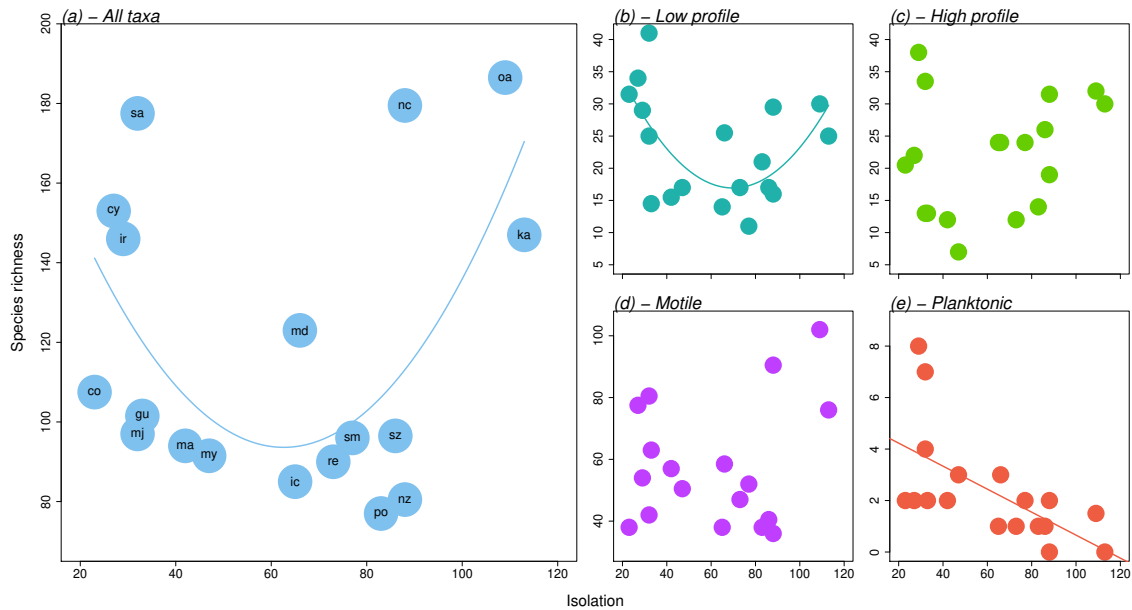
554 **Figure 1: Descriptive diagram of the methods.** Diagram describing the methodological
 555 process used for creation of continental area equivalents (CAE) and subsampling of both
 556 islands and CAEs.



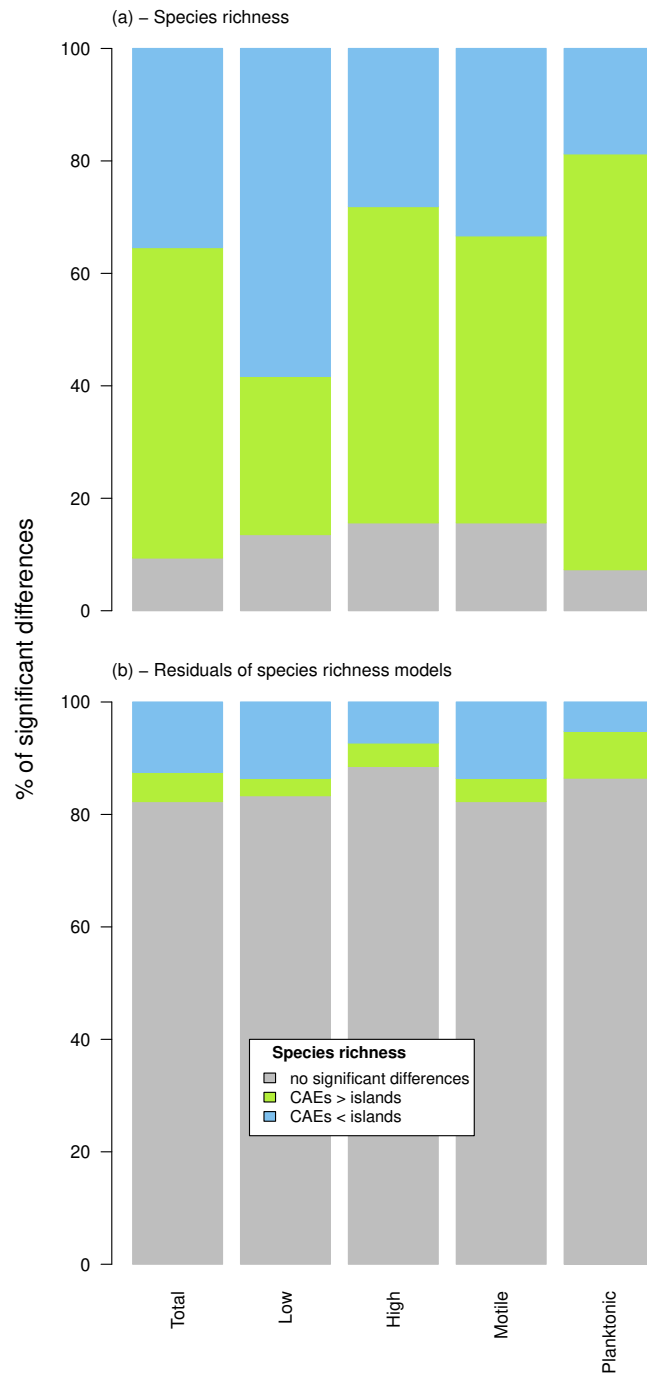
558 **Figure 2. A priori model explaining diatom species richness.** Species richness is
 559 modeled as a function of area, environmental heterogeneity, local environmental
 560 conditions (purple) and climate (orange).



562 **Figure 3. Species-area relationships for continents and islands.** Species-area
563 relationships for continental area equivalents (CAE) (in green, N=96) and islands (in
564 blue, N=18) for total species richness (a), and richness of low profile (b), high profile (c),
565 motile (d) and (e) planktonic species. Green regression lines represent significant linear
566 fits in mixed models for CAEs: richness = $8.44x + 72.24$, $R^2_m = 0.22$ for total species
567 richness, $1.09x + 10.69$, $R^2_m = 0.13$ for low-profile species, $1.74x + 13.61$, $R^2_m = 0.11$ for
568 high-profile species, $3.94x + 38.36$, $R^2_m = 0.11$ for motile species and $0.50x + 2.69$, $R^2_m =$
569 0.05 for planktonic species, where $x = \log(\text{area})$. The blue regression line represents
570 significant linear fit for high-profile species of islands: $1.93x + 6.95$, $R^2_{aj} = 0.23$. Dot
571 sizes are proportional to environmental heterogeneity (in log) for all taxa (a) and
572 proportional to total species richness for functional groups (b-e). Error bars represent
573 standard deviation estimated from the subsampling procedure. Text in dots indicate the
574 dataset used for computing species richness and area. For example, 'fr_my' indicates the
575 position of Mayotte CAE in France. Continental datasets are indicated by 'fr' for France,
576 'us' for US, 'fi' for Finland, 'ch' for China, 'ke' for Kenya and 'gy' for French Guiana
577 and islands indicated by 'ic' for Iceland, 'co' for Corsica, 'gu' for Guadeloupe, 'ma' for
578 Martinique, 're' for La Réunion, 'my' for Mayotte, 'nz' for North New Zealand, 'sz' for
579 South New Zealand, 'nc' for New Caledonia, 'ka' for Kauai, 'oa' for Oahu, 'po' for
580 Possession, 'cy' for Cyprus, 'ir' for Ireland, 'md' for Madeira, 'mj' for Majorca, 'sm' for
581 São Miguel and 'sa' for Sardinia.



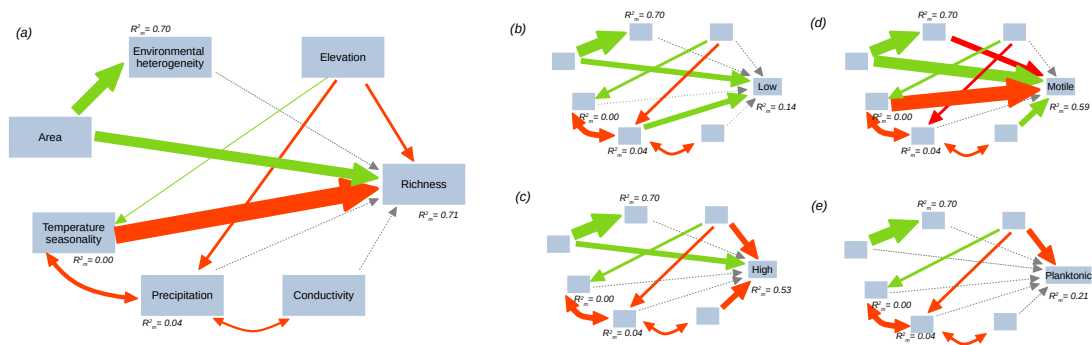
583 **Figure 4. Relationships between island species richness and isolation.** Relationship
 584 between total species richness (a) and species richness of each ecological guild (b-e) with
 585 island isolation for islands ($N = 18$). Significant linear and quadratic relationships
 586 ($p < 0.05$) are shown by regression fits (only the fit with the lower AIC is shown if both
 587 are significant, see Appendix S13): $0.03x^2 - 3.79x + 212.32$, $R^2_{aj} = 0.26$ for total richness,
 588 $0.01x^2 - 0.96x + 50.44$, $R^2_{aj} = 0.32$ for low-profile and $-0.04x + 5.12$, $R^2_{aj} = 0.34$ for
 589 planktonic species. For island names, see Fig. 1. Isolation is based on index defined by
 590 Dahl (Dahl, 1991).



592 **Figure 5. Comparison of species richness between continental area equivalents**
 593 **(CAEs) and islands.** Percentage of significant and non-significant tests ($N = 96$
 594 continent-island pairs) between CAEs and islands for species richness (a) and species

614 richness residuals (b). Tests were performed for total and guild species richness. Species
615 richness residuals were estimated from linear mixed models with species richness as the
616 dependent variable, and pH, conductivity, elevation, mean annual temperature and
617 precipitation, temperature and precipitation seasonality and environmental heterogeneity
618 as explanatory variables and continent as a random factor. Comparisons of values (i.e.,
619 species richness or residuals of species richness) were performed with Cliff's test,
620 whereby tests with $\delta > 0.33$ indicated significant differences (Romano et al., 2006).

621



623 **Figure 6. Structural equation models explaining species richness in continental area**
 624 **equivalents (CAEs).** Structural equation models for total species richness (a), low profile
 625 (b), high profile (c), motile (d) and planktonic (e) species richness in continents (N = 96
 626 CAEs). Green and red arrows represent significant positive and negative relationships,
 627 respectively, whereas gray-dashed arrows represent non-significant relationships. Arrow
 628 widths are proportional to the standardized regression coefficients and R^2_m values
 629 represent marginal R^2 from a linear mixed model. All models fitted well the *a priori*
 630 model, i.e. the model including all shown causal relationships (Fisher's C = 14.99, df =
 631 14, p = 0.38 for all models).

632 **Data Availability Statement**

633 Data are available under the following link: <https://doi.org/10.57745/ZPBSLT>

634

635 **References**

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637 **Biosketch**

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