

GOA solid-phase barium cycling time series (2013-2016)

Website: <https://www.bco-dmo.org/dataset/1002515>

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Project

» [The Speed, Signature, and Significance of Barium Transformations in Seawater](#) (The Three S's)

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Coverage

Spatial Extent: Lat:0 Lon:0

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Parameters

Parameters for this dataset have not yet been identified

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Project Information

The Speed, Signature, and Significance of Barium Transformations in Seawater (The Three S's)

Coverage: Eastern Tropical Pacific, Subtropical South Pacific, Sub-Antarctic Pacific, and Southern Oceans

NSF Award Abstract:

The biological cycling of carbon in the oceans entrains many other elements, some directly (like nutrients that are essential for life) and some indirectly, as they become chemically involved in the processes that are affecting carbon. One such element is barium (Ba). Particles of the mineral barite (barium sulfate) have been found to form in association with microbial consumption of organic material in the ocean's "twilight zone." These particles settle to the ocean floor, and their presence in sediments has been used to infer changes in the conditions in the ocean back in time. Both the amount of barite in sediments and the isotope composition of Ba in barite are potentially sensitive to processes occurring in the twilight zone. However, several long-standing questions remain about Ba cycling in the oceans, which complicates the interpretation of barium-based proxy records. Examples of remaining questions include how much barium enters the oceans at mid-ocean ridge hydrothermal sites, and what controls the precipitation and dissolution of barite in the water column. This project seeks to tackle these questions using new approaches, on three scheduled research expeditions in the Pacific and Southern Oceans. In doing so, this project will support the education, training, and career development of a graduate student, postdoctoral researcher, and junior investigator. Undergraduate students from underrepresented groups will be recruited to conduct complementary shore-based experiments.

This proposal seeks to answer four questions central to the utility of barium-based proxies in oceanography: What are the major inputs of new Ba to the ocean? What are their isotopic compositions? What controls the amount of pelagic barite precipitated during the remineralization of organic matter? What influences its isotopic composition? These questions will be addressed using a field-centric approach combining: in situ and shipboard tracer-incubation experiments, AUV-led adaptive sampling of Ba cycling 'hotspots', and section-based surveying of the surrounding oceanographic features. This multi-pronged approach will be used to

investigate: the flux and isotopic composition of Ba released from the largest hydrothermal fields in the ocean, the Southern East Pacific Rise, with a focus on low-temperature venting; rates and signatures of pelagic barite precipitation associated with different phytoplankton assemblages in the Southern Ocean; and, the importance of environmental conditions, such as low ambient oxygen concentrations, in setting the efficiency of barite precipitation in the Eastern Tropical Pacific. The significance of each transformation will be assessed, which may lead to ruling out the importance of certain processes, or identifying new dependencies that could form the basis of new proxies.

This award reflects NSF's statutory mission and has been deemed worthy of support through evaluation using the Foundation's intellectual merit and broader impacts review criteria.

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Funding

Funding Source	Award
NSF Division of Ocean Sciences (NSF OCE)	OCE-2023456

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