

The (dis)organization of tropical food webs in aquatic ecosystems

Victor Saito

Federal University of São Carlos

Summary: Tropical running waters are among the most dynamic and challenging ecosystems to be studied. They naturally encompass a huge biodiversity tangled in a complex and seemed disorganized web of interactions. In this talk, I will aim at explaining the assembly of tropical freshwater communities and food webs through the lens of niche-neutral theories and the metabolic theory of ecology. First, I will explain how temporal and spatial variation in tropical streams can be largely explained by neutral processes due to the natural low density of populations in warm conditions. Second, I will address how distinct metabolism in tropical and temperate ecosystems may control the relative influence of niche and neutral processes influencing biodiversity organization. Finally, I will discuss how a metabolic perspective of community assembly can be used to understand environmental impacts and help us forecast ecosystems' response to pressures.

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