SPATIAL PATTERN IN PLANKTON COMMUNITIES

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FOREWORD

The planning for the conference held at Erice, Sicily, in November 1977, began with discussions among oceanographers from several countries on the need to consider the special problems and the recent results in the study of plankton "patchiness." An approach to the Marine Sciences Panel of the NATO Science Committee resulted in a planning grant to determine the probable content and participation in such a meeting.

The planning group consisted of B. Battaglia (Padua), G.E.B. Kullenberg (Copenhagen), A. Okubo (New York), T. Platt (Halifax, Nova Scotia) and J. H. Steele (Aberdeen). The group met in Aberdeen, Scotland, in September 1976.

The proposal for a NATO School on the subject of "Spatial Pattern in Plankton Communities" was accepted by the Marine Science Panel and it was agreed that it be held at the Ettore Majorana Centre for Scientific Culture in Erice.

The Centre began in 1963 with an International School of Subnuclear Physics and has since developed to include courses in many other subjects which cover various fields of basic and applied research. The original aim of the Centre was to create, in Italy, a cultural forum of high scientific standard which would allow young research workers to appreciate problems currently of major interest in various fields of research. This is now attained by encouraging and promoting national and international meetings among specialists actively engaged in advanced disciplines, thus offering the younger scientists a unique opportunity to discuss with their more qualified colleagues the results of their investigations. Since these aims corresponded closely to those of the NATO School, we were happy to accept the kind invitation of Professor Zichichi, Director of the Centre. We wish to thank him and his colleagues at Erice for the hospitality enjoyed by all the participants.

The Centre is sponsored by the Sicilian Regional Government, the Italian Ministry of Public Education, and the Ministry of Scientific and Technological Research. The various schools take place under the sponsorship and with some financial aid from these national agencies.

The Centre has its own journal: "Progress in Scientific Culture" whose articles have an interdisciplinary character. The Journal has published summaries of the lectures delivered during this NATO School.

The meeting at Erice provided valuable opportunities for interdisciplinary consideration of new and important questions in marine science. We hope this volume reflects the nature of these questions and the recent advances in this field. We are grateful to the NATO Science Committee for its support of the School.

Bruno Battaglia

John H. Steele

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