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Elena Guerrero, Anna Marrodán, Ana Sabatés, **Covadonga Orejas**, Josep-Maria Gili, 2016. [High spatial heterogeneity of two planktonic cnidarian species related to the variability of a shelf-slope front at short time scales](#)

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Abstract: We investigated the variability in the mesoscale distribution of the siphonophore *Muggiaea atlantica*

and the hydromedusa

Aglaura hemistoma

in relation to the rapid spatial oscillations of the shelf-slope front off the Catalan coast (NW Mediterranean). Three extensive surveys were carried out in spring at ten-day intervals. High variability in the position of the front resulted from the advection of low-salinity waters originating in the Gulf of Lions, mainly from the Rhône River runoff. High spatial variability in the distribution of the two species was closely related to the shifting positions of the front. Both species occurred on its inshore side in much higher abundances than on its offshore side, where they were scarce or absent. The front acts as a barrier limiting offshore displacement of these two cnidarians. Statistical analyses showed that bottom depth and salinity, as independent variables, were indicators of the signature and position of the front, explaining most of the variance in the distribution and abundance of the two species.

Keywords: Siphonophorae, Hydromedusae, *Muggiaea atlantica*, *Aglaura hemistoma*, mesoscale NW Mediterranean