



Review

Quantitative models of nitrogen-fixing organisms

Keisuke Inomura^{a,*}, Curtis Deutsch^a, Takako Masuda^b, Ondřej Prášil^b, Michael J. Follows^c^a School of Oceanography, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, USA^b Institute of Microbiology, The Czech Academy of Sciences, Opatovický mlýn, Třeboň, Czech Republic^c Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, USA

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 28 August 2020

Received in revised form 11 November 2020

Accepted 13 November 2020

Available online 21 November 2020

Keywords:

Nitrogen fixation

Nitrogen fixers

Quantitative model

Mathematical model

Photosynthesis

Oxygen

ABSTRACT

Nitrogen-fixing organisms are of importance to the environment, providing bioavailable nitrogen to the biosphere. Quantitative models have been used to complement the laboratory experiments and *in situ* measurements, where such evaluations are difficult or costly. Here, we review the current state of the quantitative modeling of nitrogen-fixing organisms and ways to enhance the bridge between theoretical and empirical studies.

© 2020 The Authors. Published by Elsevier B.V. on behalf of Research Network of Computational and Structural Biotechnology. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Contents

1. Introduction	3906
1.1. Nitrogen fixation and its influence in the environment	3906
1.2. Key controls for N ₂ fixation and their management at a cellular level	3906
1.2.1. Reduced C	3906
1.2.2. Phosphorus and iron	3906
1.2.3. O ₂	3907
1.3. Quantitative modeling of N ₂ fixers	3908
2. Type of model	3909
2.1. Simple equations	3909
2.2. Detailed metabolic models	3910
2.3. Coarse-grained models	3911
3. Modeled organisms	3911
3.1. Nitrogen fixers in terrestrial and freshwater environments	3911
3.1.1. Azotobacter	3911
3.1.2. Rhizobium	3911
3.1.3. Anabaena	3911
3.2. Nitrogen fixers in marine environments	3912
3.2.1. Trichodesmium	3912
3.2.2. Crocosphaera	3913
3.2.3. Richelia	3913
4. Resolved elements in coarse-grained models	3914
4.1. C and N fluxes	3914
4.2. P fluxes	3914
4.3. Fe fluxes	3914

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: ki24@uw.edu (K. Inomura).

4.4.	Fluxes and intracellular concentration of O ₂	3914
4.5.	Fixed N uptake and its influence on N ₂ fixation	3914
5.	Remaining challenges	3914
5.1.	Trichodesmium paradox	3915
5.2.	Modeling more organisms and outstanding questions	3915
5.2.1.	Symbiosis	3915
5.2.2.	Marine heterotrophic bacteria	3916
5.2.3.	Anaerobic nitrogen-fixing bacteria	3916
5.3.	Application of coarse-grained models in larger scale simulations	3916
6.	Enhancing collaboration between theory and observation	3916
6.1.	Experiment-model cycles	3916
6.2.	Experiment-model synthesis	3916
6.3.	Examples of useful experimental methods	3917
6.3.1.	Chemostat culture	3917
6.3.2.	Batch culture	3917
6.3.3.	Observation (field measurements)	3918
6.4.	Examples of useful parameters	3918
6.5.	Emerging experimental methods and data	3919
7.	Summary and outlook	3919
	Author contributions	3919
	Declaration of Competing Interest	3919
	Acknowledgements	3919
	References	3919

1. Introduction

1.1. Nitrogen fixation and its influence in the environment

Biological nitrogen fixation (hereafter “N₂ fixation”) is the dominant source of reactive nitrogen (N) in the Earth system, far exceeding abiotic sources from lightning [1–4]. It provides bioavailable N to the biosphere supporting organismal growth of various trophic levels and human lives (Fig. 1). On land, bioavailable N (fixed by e.g., *Rhizobium* [5–8] and free-living bacteria [4,7–9]) is transferred to the primary producers (e.g., plants, cyanobacteria), which are then transferred to consumers. N₂ fixation is of special interest in agricultural sectors [7–10], since it is an environmentally sustainable source of bioavailable N, reducing the use of fertilizer, which is economically and environmentally costly [8–10].

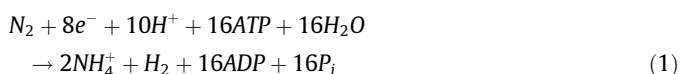
In the ocean, the majority of N₂ fixation is performed by prokaryotic phytoplankton, which is then consumed by larger plankton and by fish, some of which are consumed by human beings (Fig. 1). The fixed N released (often combined with C) from these organisms is a component of ecosystem N inputs [11,12]. It has been estimated that about a half of fixed, or bioavailable N, originates from microbial N₂ fixation, important also for the coupled the C cycle [1,13]. A greater oceanic inventory of fixed N may increase the primary production [11,14,15] and export of organic C to the deep ocean [11,14].

1.2. Key controls for N₂ fixation and their management at a cellular level

Although N₂ fixation has an influence at the ecosystem scale, the rate of N₂ fixation is constrained at a cellular level. In this section we explore major limiting factors (i.e. reduced C, inorganic nutrients and O₂) and how the cells acquire and manage them. These are the key factors in the development of the models for N₂ fixing organisms (hereafter N₂ fixers).

1.2.1. Reduced C

N₂ fixation requires electrons and energy:



Reduced C, such as carbohydrates and lipids, provides the electrons and energy for N₂ fixation, thus influencing the rate of N₂ fixation, especially when C is limited and/or other nutrients are abundant. Organic carbon is oxidized by metabolic processes (e.g., TCA cycle), providing reducing agents (e.g., NADH) [16–19], which are used to transfer electrons to nitrogenase [20–22]. Such reducing equivalents donate electrons to the electron transport chain and ATP synthesis [16,17], the energy carrier for stepwise reduction of N₂ to ammonia (NH₃) [23,24], most of which is instantly converted to ammonium (NH₄⁺) at typical intracellular cellular pH.

There are three main ways to acquire organic C (Fig. 2A). One is from the external environment (heterotrophic C acquisition), which is common in soil [9] and sediments [25], but recognized in the open ocean as well [26]. In this case, the availability of organic C limits the rate of N₂ fixation [27]. The second way is through photosynthesis, in which light energy is used to separate electrons from water, which in turn is used for reducing CO₂ [16–18]. In this way, the cells can access a ubiquitous source of C but light availability is essential and thus the process is limited to the day time in the surface ocean. The third way is through symbiosis with photoautotrophic organisms, such as plants and phytoplankton [28–32]. The photoautotrophic hosts provide C to the N₂ fixer, and in return, the N₂ fixers provide fixed N to the host.

1.2.2. Phosphorus and iron

Phosphorus (P) and iron (Fe) are also important for N₂ fixation [33–38]. Fe is an essential trace metal for N₂ fixation as it forms co-factors for nitrogenase (nitrogen-fixing enzyme) [23,24]. P, on the other hand, influences the rate of N₂ fixation rather indirectly, as it is used for various parts of the cells that holds nitrogenase, such as cell membrane, ATP (energy transferring molecule), DNA and RNA [16–19]. We note that nitrogenase requires other trace metals such as molybdenum (Mo) and vanadium (V) [24,39–42]. In this review, we focus on Fe, since it has been more explicitly represented in quantitative models.

Inorganic forms of these nutrients are transported into the cell by transporters [43–45], since these molecules are generally charged in water (e.g., PO₄³⁻, Fe²⁺) and do not usually go through cell membrane. Cells have various strategies for acquiring these, such as the use of high affinity transporters for PO₄³⁻ [43,46] and physical attachment to Fe rich particles [47]. Some cells live within

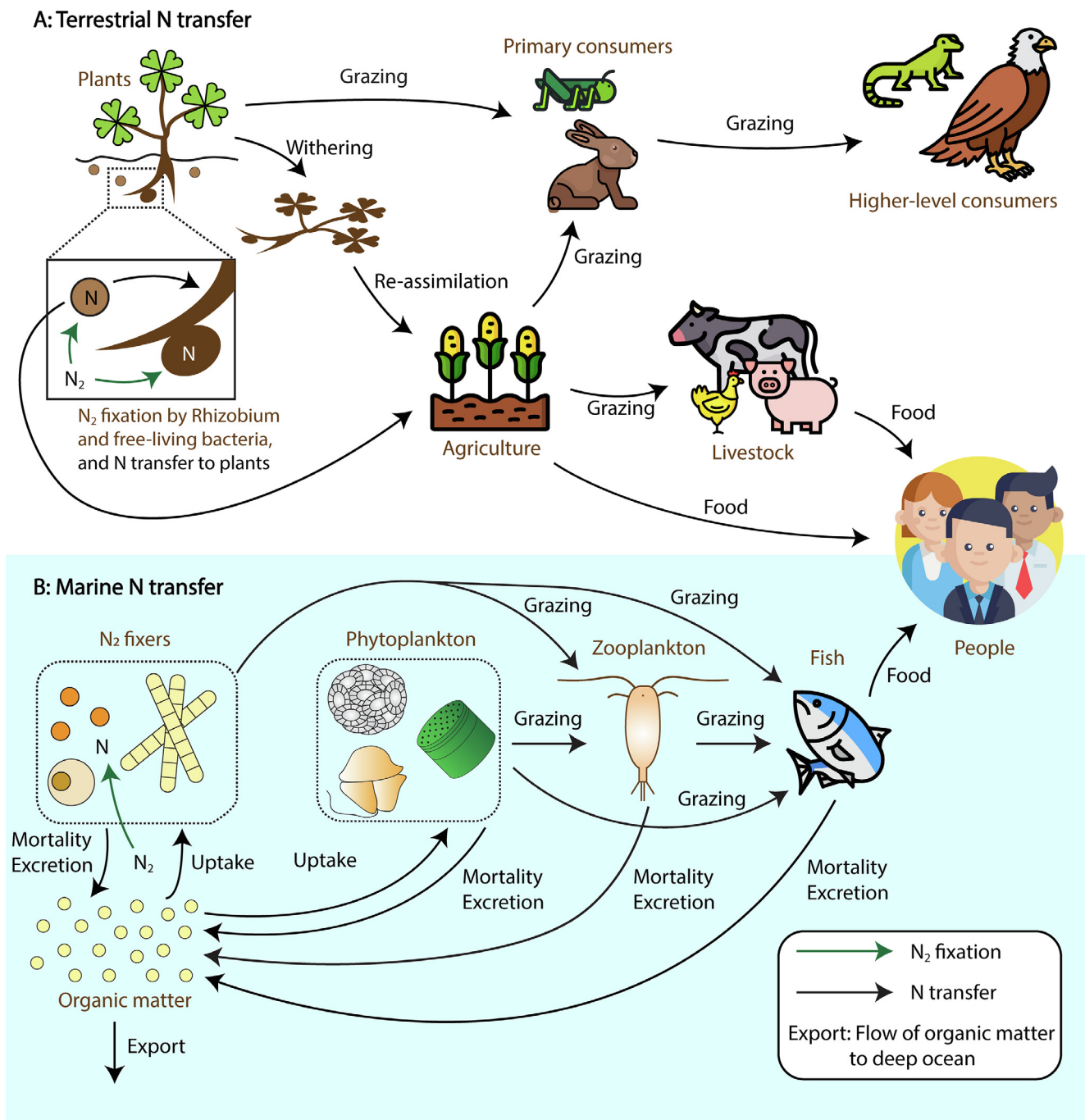


Fig. 1. N flows in (A) terrestrial and (B) marine systems. “N” indicates fixed N whereas “ N_2 ” indicates dinitrogen gas.

other microbial cells or are symbiotic to plants [28–32], potentially acquiring these molecules from the hosts. We note that organic P [43,46,48] and Fe associated with organic molecules [49–52] can also be used by N_2 fixers.

1.2.3. O_2

O_2 is essential for respiration but is rather detrimental for N_2 fixation [53–55]. Especially, under normal aquatic O_2 concentrations, the Fe protein in nitrogenase complex loses its activity irreversibly [54]. Thus, N_2 fixing cells must create a low oxygen environment in the cytoplasm, where nitrogenase exists, to enable N_2 fixation. This is particularly challenging for photosynthetic N_2 fixers since photosynthesis produces O_2 [16–19]. One simple way

to avoid it is to fix N_2 during the night [56–59] (Fig. 2B). Because photosynthesis requires light and only occurs during the day, the dark period is an ideal time for N_2 fixation. However, this strategy is not universal; some photoautotrophic organisms fix N_2 during the day (e.g., *Trichodesmium* and *Anabaena*) [60–63]. Some of these organisms (e.g., *Anabaena*) form filaments and have differentiated cells (heterocysts) for N_2 fixation [64,65], segregating the sites of photosynthesis and N_2 fixation.

Although these strategies are effective in managing photosynthetically originated O_2 , they may not be sufficient, since the non-polar O_2 molecules can diffuse into the cell from the external environment [66,67]. O_2 in the environment is often high (e.g., generally $> 150 \mu M$ in the surface ocean [68–70] and nearly satu-

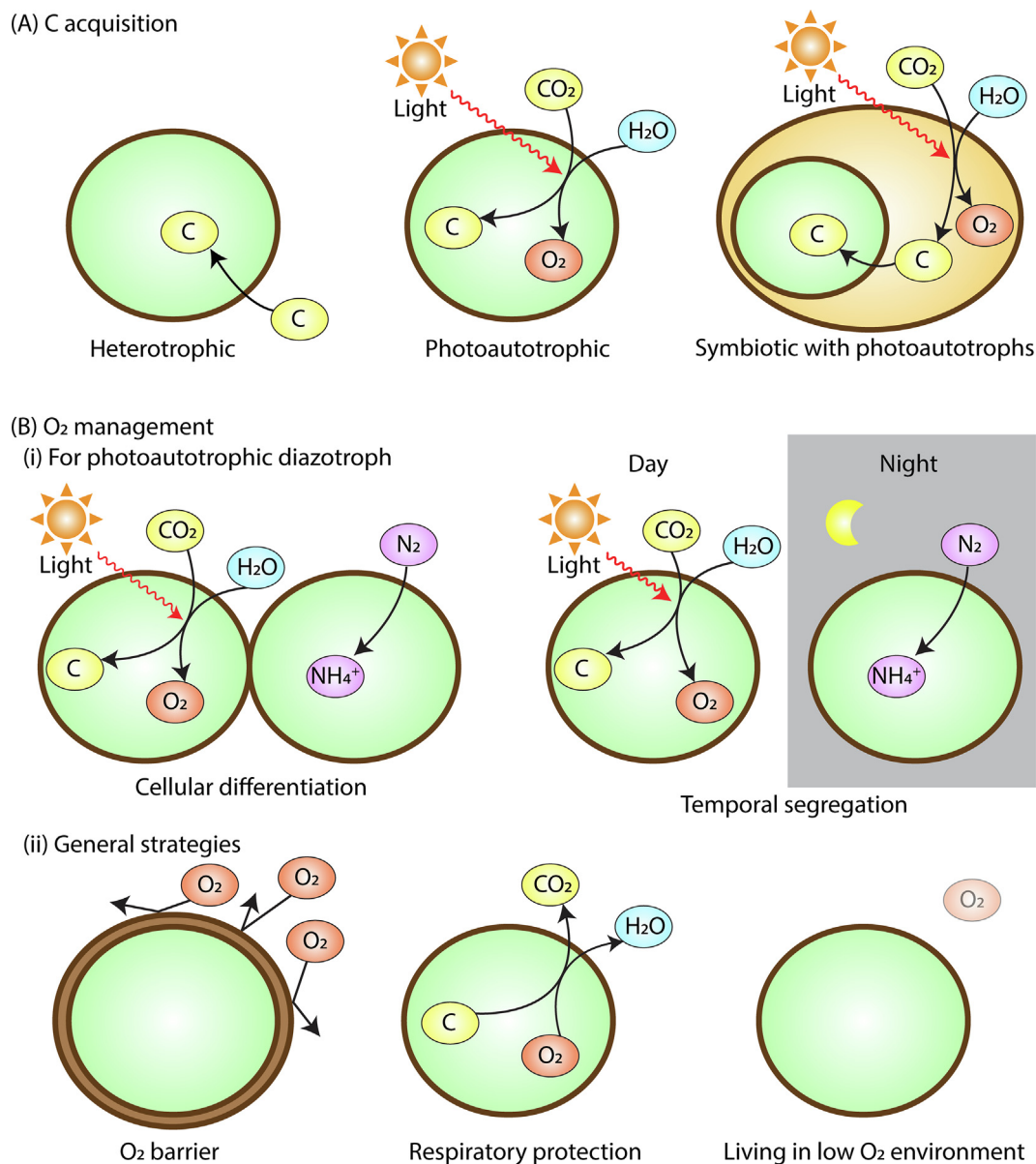


Fig. 2. Strategies for (A) Biomass (organic) C acquisition and (B) O₂ management. Here “C” in a yellow oval represents biomass C. The following are example organisms: (A) Heterotrophic: *Azotobacter*, *Clostridium*. Photoautotrophic: *Crocospaera*, *Trichodesmium*, *Anabaena*. Symbiotic: *Rhizobium*, UCYN-A. (B) Cellular differentiation: *Anabaena*, *Richelia*. Temporal Segregation: *Crocospaera*, *Cyanothece*. O₂ barrier: *Azotobacter* (proposed [72], predicted [53] and supported [81,82]), *Crocospaera* (predicted [53,75]), *Anabaena*, *Trichodesmium* (predicted [83,84]). Respiratory protection: *Azotobacter*, *Crocospaera* (predicted [75,85]), *Trichodesmium* (predicted [83]). Living in low O₂ environment, *Clostridium*. (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

rated (~20% O₂) in the shallow layers of soil [71]), which creates gradient of O₂ concentration that favors O₂ flows from the external environment into the cell (Fick’s first law of diffusion).

One way that organisms manage this problem is to create a barrier around the cytoplasm (Fig. 2B) [64,72,73]. Such a barrier would minimize the O₂ diffusion and allow the cells to keep the steep gradient of O₂ between the cytoplasm and external environment. However, an excessive barrier could also limit the diffusive source of N₂. Another way to manage O₂ is respiratory protection (i.e. respiration to reduce intracellular O₂) [53,74]. Even if there is a high O₂ flux into the cell, if the rate of respiration matches the flux, a low intracellular O₂ can be maintained [27,53,75]. Finally, there are organisms that live in low O₂ environments such as in sediments [25,76,77] and Oxygen Minimum Zones in water columns (OMZs) [78], circumventing the O₂ problem. Some symbiotic systems may provide local environments with low O₂ [79,80]. The

threshold of environmental O₂ below which N₂ fixation occurs depends on the potential level of respiration and other O₂ management mechanisms (such as O₂ barrier) [53].

1.3. Quantitative modeling of N₂ fixers

To quantify the activities of N₂ fixers and the effect of the factors controlling N₂ fixation, extensive measurements have been conducted in the open ocean [86–88] and on land [10,89,90]. To study the physiology of N₂ fixers, a significant number of experiments and *in situ* observation have also been conducted [9,91,92]. However, there are still significant unknowns and experiments/observations are generally costly and many properties are difficult to measure: even major methods for measuring the rate of N₂ fixation have been questioned [93–97] and it is still challenging to directly measure the intracellular concentration of O₂, which

is detrimental to nitrogenase, the N₂ fixing enzyme complex [53,54].

Quantitative models (see Table 1 for the definition) have been used to complement biological measurements, providing mathematical theories to interpret observations, formulate new hypotheses, and make predictions where data are missing (Fig. 3). For example, based on the model of simple cellular metabolisms as well as the available environmental factors (such as nutrient, light and temperature), models may predict the rate of N₂ fixation as well as intracellular concentration of O₂ as well as the fate of intracellular C or cellular growth [27,53,83,98–100]. Such models of N₂ fixers can be used to quantitatively interpret experimental data (e.g., what controls the growth or N₂ fixation rates of cells at a certain time point or under a certain condition?). They can also be implemented in larger-scale ecosystem simulations, such as terrestrial [101–103] and regional [104,105] and global [106,107] ocean models, which are used for interpreting *in situ* observations of biogeography and N₂ fixation rates [88,106,108–110] and for predicting changes in global ecosystems (such as plankton competitions and food transfers) [104,106], biogeochemical cycles (such as N, C, and trace metal cycles) [104,107,111,112], and climate [113–117].

2. Type of model

A number of models have been developed to express physiology of N₂ fixers, but they can broadly fit into one of the three groups: simple equations (analytical theory with relatively small number of equations and variables), coarse-grained models, and detailed metabolic models (Fig. 4). The resolution of metabolic processes increases in this order, but computation becomes less efficient (i.e. taking longer time for the same amount of computational power) and model-data comparison becomes harder. These three types of models are complementary to each other and are used for different purposes. We describe each type with examples in the following part.

Table 1
Some modeling terms and definitions in this paper.

Name	Definition
Quantitative model	A mathematical description combined with quantification of a phenomenon, often solved by computers. In this paper, we simply use a term “model” for such a model. The antonym for this term is “qualitative model”, which describes phenomenon without numerical evaluation. In this paper we focus on quantitative approaches.
Biogeochemical model	A mathematical description or simulation of biologically, chemically and physically mediated elemental and chemical fluxes in the environment. Typically focused on ecosystem and global scales, and relationships with the Earth’s environment. In global-scale biogeochemical simulations, biological growth and activities are generally highly simplified and often implicit.
Ecological/Ecosystem model	A model that simulates the growth and activities of biological organisms (generally two or more) in a particular environment (from regional to global scales).
Cellular/Physiological/ Metabolic model	A model that simulates the metabolism of microbial cells, resolving fluxes and sometimes reservoirs of molecules within the cell.
Optimization model	A model in which parameters are tuned systematically in order to best match observed states or to fulfill certain conditions, such as maximization of a certain output (e.g., biomass production).

Slash “/” in the name indicates that we use these terms interchangeably.

2.1. Simple equations

The simplest category of models describes populations and rates with only a few equations, often used as a part of the ecological models. Good examples are Monod-type (Michaelis-Menten

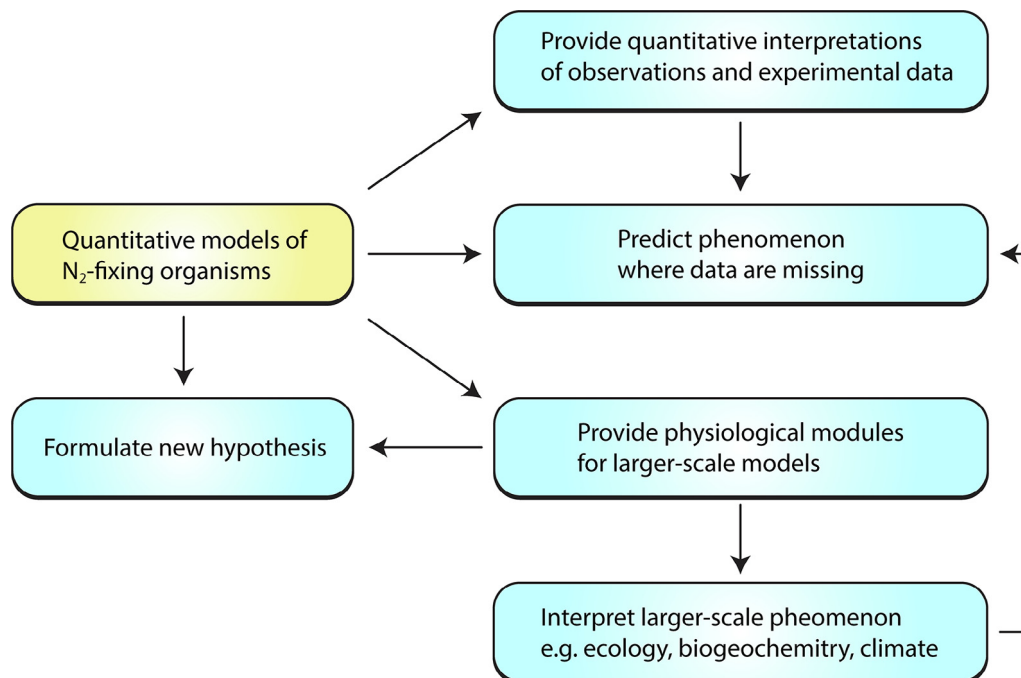


Fig. 3. Roles of quantitative models of N₂ fixers. Arrows indicate causes and effects.

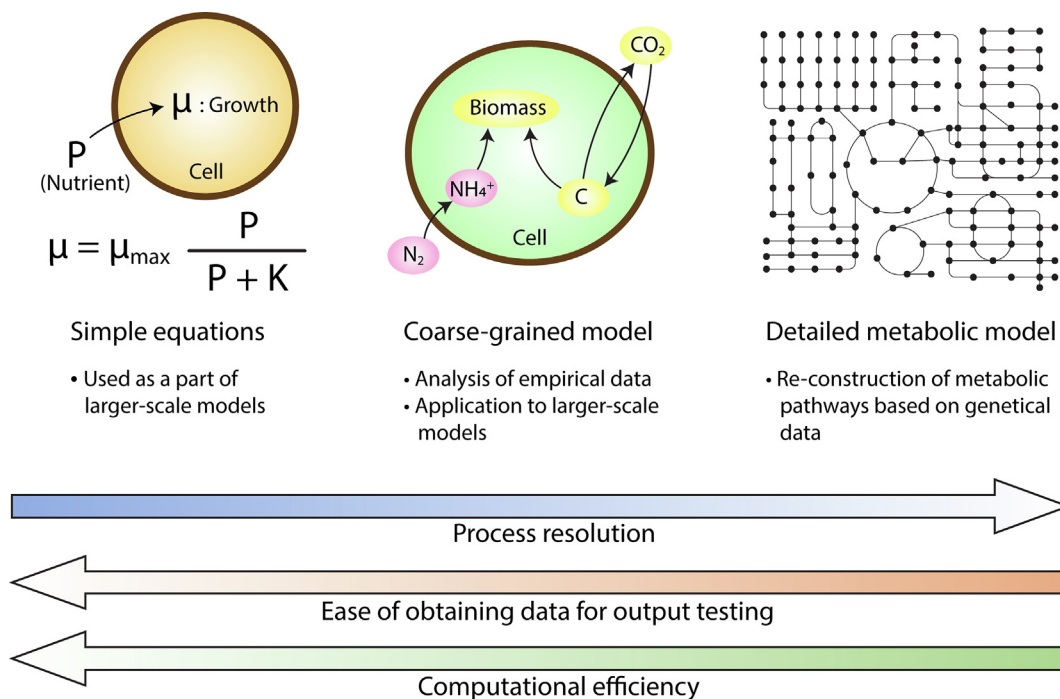


Fig. 4. Schematics of three different types of models. μ_{\max} : maximum growth rate. K: half saturation constant for growth based on nutrient concentration following Monod kinetics [118], widely used in ecosystem modeling [102,104,107,124]. Examples of coarse-grained model and detailed metabolic model include Cell Flux Model (CFM) [53,75,83,121]. One widely used detailed metabolic model is Flux Balance Analysis (FBA) [135–138].

like saturating relationship) equations [118] used in ecosystem models (see Table 1 for the definition) [104,106,119], where the growth rate is described as a simple function of external environmental factors, such as light, temperature and nutrients. The rate of N_2 fixation can be calculated based on the growth and elemental stoichiometry of the cells. Specifically, these models compute N_2 fixation by multiplying the growth rate, biomass N per cell, and cell population such that N_2 fixation is implicitly sufficient to meet nitrogen demand. In such models, intracellular properties, such as elemental stoichiometry of cells and macromolecular allocations, are generally assumed constant, despite the fact that in reality they generally vary significantly [120–123].

Despite their simplicity, simple equations are the main way to express physiology of N_2 fixers in large-scale models, such as ocean ecosystem models [104,106,119,124]. One key reason is computational efficiency; more complex biological descriptions require more state-variables and more computational operations, thus increasing both memory and processing demands which can become prohibitively expensive. Although highly idealized, these ecosystem models with simple equations seem to broadly capture the observations [104,106,110,125]. Here, it is assumed that the growth rates of N_2 fixers are not limited by N but by P and Fe, allowing them to acquire a niche where N is scarce. In general, the effects of the “end product suppression” by fixed N are not considered, despite its potential importance. Using the simplified equations, we can connect to ecological theory for the shaping of communities: under steady state conditions the simplified equations lead to a resource supply ratio theory, suggesting that the niches of N_2 fixers are constrained based on the ratio of nutrient sources (specifically N, P, Fe) [34,126].

Idealized mathematical descriptions (simple equations) are also developed and employed for terrestrial simulations. Some models simply assume that the rate of N_2 fixation is proportional to the amount of biomass [103,127–129]. Other models assume that the rate of N_2 fixation is a function of temperature [101,130]. Similar to ocean models, Michaelis-Menten type equations are often used,

where the rate of N_2 fixation is calculated based on the available C and N [102]. It is noteworthy that most models are formulated in the context of symbiosis with plants [102,103,127,128] due to the existence of wide-spread plants-*Rhizobium* symbiosis. In the context of symbiosis, some terrestrial models relate net primary production [89,131,132] or evapotranspiration [89,133] of plants to the rate of N_2 fixation. The net primary production of the host plant has been modeled based on the cost for N_2 fixation and light availability [134]. Whereas most models are developed in the context of symbiosis, there are models that combine both symbiotic and non-symbiotic N_2 fixation, prescribing different temperature functions to each type [101,130].

Simple models have the advantage of mathematical transparency; they are easier to interpret and apply. They are also computationally cheap for global-scale biogeochemical applications. On the other hand, they may gloss over many processes which are known to be important and they are usually not easy to calibrate or test with the exploding database of ‘omics observations because the currencies of simple models tend not to translate simply into genes or transcripts. For example, gene-copy per cell is highly variable taxonomically, thus hard to relate to biomass. Transcription can be fleeting and highly taxonomically specific. One way to exploit ‘omics data more directly is to develop models at the genome-scale.

2.2. Detailed metabolic models

Detailed metabolic models are on the other side of the complexity spectrum, since they include genome-scale simulations which represent metabolic networks of hundreds of reactions (Fig. 4), generally using FBA (Flux Balance Analysis) [135–138]. FBA is a mathematical method for simulating a balanced metabolic flux network of any size based on optimization of fluxes, which is done by matrix computation. Many potentially viable network configurations are possible in order to satisfy given boundary conditions and optimization targets. Optimal network configurations are

sought by maximizing biomass production [137,138], minimizing a number of metabolic pathways [139,140] or other constraints. The strength and a key application of such simulations is to predict metabolic organization and fluxes from observed genomes [135,141,142]. The volume of genome sequences is rapidly increasing, enabling the application of FBA to a wide range of organisms including N_2 fixers.

Despite the wide use of FBA, there are still challenges. First, the model output is often hard to compare with data. It is rarely the case that data to constrain hundreds of pathways are available [143], and the comprehensive test of the output is challenging and often highly qualitative. The models typically evaluate metabolic fluxes but not the abundance of metabolites or macromolecules, which have been actively measured recently ([123,144–146]). Genome scale simulations may be computationally demanding in order to find the optimum (see Table 1 for definition) of thousands of solutions [135,138]. Although a genome-scale FBA can be run on a laptop computer, current codes can take seconds to minutes for a single solution, limiting their application in large-scale ecosystem simulations. However, there have been efforts to overcome this challenge (e.g., [147–149]).

2.3. Coarse-grained models

Coarse-grained models lie between the complexity of the simplified equation and genome-scale FBA approaches described above: they include more detailed physiologies than simple analytical equations may allow, but resolve fewer metabolic pathways than the genome-scale simulations [150] (Fig. 4). Typically they resolve an idealized and simplified representation of metabolic pathways at the level of major cellular function including biosynthesis, respiration and photosynthesis as well as N_2 fixation as a whole [53,98,99,121,151]. These models are typically constrained by conservation constraints on elemental, electron and energy budgets [27,53,152,153]. Some coarse-grained models resolve macromolecular allocation [121,122,154], which can be compared with emerging sources of macromolecular and proteomics data.

Whereas there are variations in coarse-grained models, they can be made computationally efficient and possibly incorporated into larger models. Especially, optimization related loops within the computational codes are not essential [75,83,121], which would increase the computational load significantly. The implementation of a coarse-grained model of N_2 fixer in regional-scale model has been recently done for a major marine N_2 fixer, *Trichodesmium* [105]. The implementation of coarse-grained models of N_2 fixers in global scale models has not been done, but is possible. Although comprehensive metabolic pathways may not be reconstructed from genomic data as can be done for FBA, metabolic pathways can be selectively included [155], creating variations in the network of metabolic fluxes [27,75,153,156]. Compared to other two types of models, coarse-grained models do not have a set of “standard formulas” and can be flexibly modified for specific purposes or available data: especially suited for bulk measurements such as those from batch-cultures or chemostat-cultures [58,85,123,146,157–159].

3. Modeled organisms

For obvious reasons, most physiological models have been developed around “model organisms” which have been extensively studied in laboratories. Here we discuss selected major model organisms and group them based on the environment (terrestrial/freshwater and marine), the modeling approaches applied, (Fig. 5) and the inferences gained from those models.

3.1. Nitrogen fixers in terrestrial and freshwater environments

Terrestrial N_2 fixers are classified broadly based on whether heterotrophic or photoautotrophic and whether free-living or symbiotic (Fig. 5). Here we select key organisms for quantitative models and explore which modeling strategies have been applied.

3.1.1. *Azotobacter*

Key modeled free-living organisms are soil dwelling heterotrophic unicellular bacteria (Fig. 5), *Azotobacter vinelandii*, which is also considered as “a model organism” in laboratory studies [9]. During the latter half of the 20th century, simple equations were used to describe the quantitative relationships between the growth rate, yield and maintenance costs as well as substrate concentration [160,161]. Similarly, simple equations were applied to the chemostat culture data of relationships between resource C:N ratio and the rate of N_2 fixation under various O_2 concentrations [162], where different parameters are prescribed for each O_2 concentration. Recently, a coarse-grained model (Cell Flux Model or CFM) has been developed [27,53], which simulates these chemostat data sets [161–163] with a single-set of parameters. This model revealed a high C cost of respiratory protection (respiration for reducing intracellular O_2 to protect nitrogenase, which is O_2 sensitive) both under diazotrophic condition [53] and when NH_4^+ is added to the culture [27]. Even when N_2 fixation did not occur due to the addition of NH_4^+ , the respiratory protection occurs, suggesting that respiratory protection is decoupled from N_2 fixation [27]. The study provided a quantitative baseline for modeling the direct and indirect costs of N_2 fixation more generally. During the similar time period, FBA was applied to *Azotobacter* and showed that O_2 availability affects TCA cycle, PP pathway and alginate and P3HB (poly-3-hydroxybutyrate) biosynthetic fluxes [164].

3.1.2. *Rhizobium*

A major terrestrial symbiotic heterotrophic N_2 fixer is *Rhizobium*, which creates bacteroids within the root nodules (legumes) of plants (e.g., clovers and alfalfa) [165] (Fig. 5). The bacteroid fixes N_2 , much of which is transported to the plants and supports their growth. Several models have been developed based on simple equations for various purposes. For example, simple equation models representing symbiotic N_2 fixers in legumes [101–103,127,130,134], have been used for various purposes including estimation of the magnitude of terrestrial N_2 fixation.

As more genomics data for *Rhizobium* become available [166,167], detailed metabolic models have also been developed. Recently FBA was applied to *Rhizobium* [137] and showed different metabolic regimes based on O_2 and carbohydrate update rates. This FBA framework is further extended based on the genomics and proteomics data [100]. However, coarse-grained type models of these systems do not seem to exist, despite their potential benefits. This might be due to the difficulty in bulk quantitative measurements of bacteroid metabolism/properties as they are tightly integrated in plant tissues, which would be essential in constraining the model.

3.1.3. *Anabaena*

Anabaena is a cyanobacterium (photo-autotrophic prokaryotic alga) both free living and symbiotic with fern plant (*Azolla*) [168–170]. We note that genus *Anabaena* has been renamed to *Dolichospermum* but here we use the term *Anabaena* as it has been more commonly used. They form a chain of cells (trichome) (Fig. 5), within which there are heterocysts [64,171,172]. Specifically, heterocysts are visually distinct with thick glycolipid layers on the cell membrane, which protects the cytoplasm and thus nitrogenase from O_2 [65,73,173]. Some studies show that bacteria specifically associated with heterocysts can provide respiratory


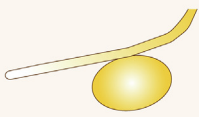
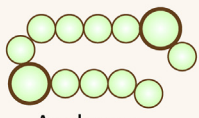
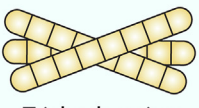

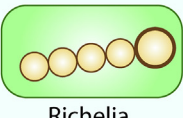
	Organism	Simple equations	Coarse-grained model	Detailed metabolic model
Terrestrial • Freshwater	 Azotobacter	✓ [160,161,162]	✓ [27,53]	✓ [138,164]
	 Rhizobium	✓ [101-103,127,130,134]		✓ [100,137]
	 Anabaena	✓ [178,180,181,187]	✓ [152,179,184,186]	✓ [188]
Marine	 Trichodesmium	✓ [104,106,113,193,194]	✓ [83,99,105,189]	✓ [149]
	 Crocosphaera, Cyanotheca	✓ [56,104,106]	✓ [75,98,153,156]	✓ [197]
	 Richelia	✓ [104,106,108]	✓ [190]	

Fig. 5. A list of major modeled N_2 fixers and current state of model development. Checkmarks indicate that the model has been developed in each way. Numbers below the check marks are example references.

protection from O_2 [174]. Heterocysts do not evolve O_2 since it lacks functional photosystem II (PSII), which evolves O_2 , but can harvest light energy with photosystem I (PSI) [64,65,175]. The light energy harvested by PSI can be used for ATP synthesis based on the cyclic electron flow and proton pumping, possibly supporting N_2 fixation [176]. Other cells, termed vegetative-cells, photosynthesize during the day, providing fixed C to heterocysts [177].

A simple equation model of *Anabaena* has been developed predicting the growth rate based on temperature, light and phosphorus availability and its intracellular quota [178]. Also, a coarse grained model of *Anabaena* has been developed, resolving the clock-controlled and non-clock-controlled protein synthesis, capturing the observed diurnal patterns of protein synthesis [179]. Later, these two models are combined, resolving heterocyst differentiation based on a wide range of laboratory experiments [152]. We note that there have been various modeling efforts to predict heterocyst development with various modeling complexities [180–186]. There also exist models of simplified equations for predicting growth rates [180,187]. Furthermore, FBA has been applied to *Anabaena* resolving both vegetative cells and heterocysts [188], which suggests the importance of the exchange in metabolites in achieving observed growth rates.

3.2. Nitrogen fixers in marine environments

Although there is a wide variety of marine N_2 fixers, currently most quantitatively modeled organisms are cyanobacteria (Fig. 5) [75,83,99,153,189,190]. Since cyanobacteria produce O_2 through photosynthesis, O_2 management is one key topic in modeling studies and is chiefly considered with coarse-grained models due to their capability of quantifying intracellular molecules [75,83,191]. Here we explore three of the key N_2 fixers in the ocean [2,3] and their distinct O_2 management strategies.

3.2.1. *Trichodesmium*

Trichodesmium is a filamentous multicellular N_2 fixer distributed across the ocean (Fig. 5) [2,3]. They fix N_2 during the day, when O_2 -producing photosynthesis occurs [60,192]. The distribution of *Trichodesmium* has been predicted by various ecosystem models [104,106,193,194] that express its physiology by simple equations directly connecting external environments to the rate of growth and N_2 fixation. In such models, it is generally assumed that the uptake of fixed N is zero and the maximum growth rate is smaller than non- N_2 -fixing counterpart as a handicap for N_2 -fixing capability. *Trichodesmium* has also been modeled

in a coarse-grained way, the beginning of which resolves the diurnal cycle of C and N, showing that N₂ fixation increases when the availability of fixed N decreases [189]. More recently, a simplified version resolves intracellular O₂ [83], predicting multiple O₂ management mechanisms, such as respiratory protection and barrier against O₂. An optimization based coarse-grained model resolving C, N and P fluxes has also been developed [99], and incorporated into regional marine ecological framework [105], showing that low P availability favors N₂ fixation, which explains the presence of N₂ fixation under high N:P supply ratios. There is also a model that resolves Fe allocation as well as C concentrating metabolism [195], predicting significant decrease in N₂ fixation by *Trichodesmium* especially in Fe limited regions. Genome-scale FBA has been applied to *Trichodesmium* predicting that about 15% of cells are actively fixing nitrogen (diazotrophic), which is within the range of observation, and about 30% of total fixed N leaks to the environment [149].

3.2.2. *Crocospaera*

Crocospaera is a unicellular cyanobacterium (Fig. 5) mainly found in oligotrophic oceans [2,3,196]. It fixes N₂ during the dark [85], temporally avoiding O₂ evolving photosynthesis [60]. A proteomics study highlighted the recycling of iron within the cell between nitrogenase and photosystems on a daily basis [56]. In ocean ecosystems, *Crocospaera* has been included as simple equations (often represented as unicellular N₂ fixers) [56,104,106]. One model illustrated the fitness advantage and extended range enabled by daily Fe recycling in the oligotrophic Pacific where Fe is scarce [56].

There are multiple types of coarse-grained models for *Crocospaera*. Some resolve functional molecules without diurnal cellular cycles [153,156]. One model resolves diurnal cycles of cellular C and N metabolisms, with more coarse molecular representation [98]. Recently, a model with a diurnal cycle resolving intracellular O₂ concentrations and Fe cycles has been developed showing that O₂ and the level of respiration are key factors in constraining their niche in warm waters (>20 °C) [75]. Furthermore, a model resolving heterogeneous N₂ fixation among the population showed that such heterogeneity decreases the cost for O₂ management and extends the depth niche of *Crocospaera* [191].

FBA has been applied to a similar diazotrophic cyanobacteria *Cyanothece* strain ATCC 51142 [197], which is found in coastal waters [198] and has recently been re-classified as *Crocospaera subtropica* ATCC 51142 [199]. The results show that the light-harvesting-balance between photosystem I and II impacts the growth rate and metabolic organization [197].

3.2.3. *Richelia*

Richelia is an obligate symbiont [200] (Fig. 5), having a similar appearance as *Anabaena* with vegetative cells for photosynthesis and heterocysts for N₂ fixation [201]. Like *Anabaena*, *Richelia* has heterocysts for N₂ fixation [31,202–206]. *Richelia* is associated with diatoms, providing fixed N to the host diatom [207]; the symbiosis is generally termed a Diatom-Diazotroph-Association or DDA [2,31,108]. DDAs have long been recognized [208,209], and resolved in ecological simulations [104,106,108,190]. Simple equations have been applied to represent DDAs in ocean models, with growth limitation by silica (which is used for diatom’s frustules

Coarse-grained model

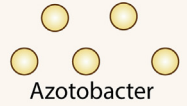
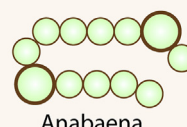
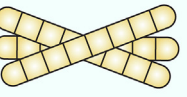

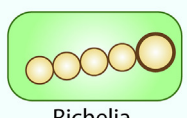
		Organism	C • N	P	Fe	O ₂	Fixed N uptake
Terrestrial • Freshwater	 Azotobacter	✓ [27,53]				✓ [27,53]	✓ [27]
	 Anabaena	✓ [152]		✓ [152]			✓ [152]
Marine	 Trichodesmium	✓ [83,99,189]		✓ [99]		✓ [83]	
	 Crocospaera, Cyanothece	✓ [75,98, 153,156]		✓ [153,156]	✓ [75,153]	✓ [75]	✓ [153,156]
	 Richelia	✓ [190]					

Fig. 6. Nitrogen fixers modeled by coarse-grained models and resolved elements. Checkmarks indicate that each element/parameter is simulated. O₂ indicates intracellular O₂ and fixed-N uptake indicates uptake of NH₄⁺ or NO₃⁻. Numbers below the check marks are example references.

[104,106]) and maximum growth rates higher than other N₂ fixers but lower than non-N₂ fixers [104,106]. Using such a trait-based approach a recent modeling study argued that seasonal variations in resource availability would select for faster-growing DDAs in the summer months in the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre, consistent with observations [108]. The hypothesized fast high growth rate of DDAs could be explained by C transfer from the host by a more recently developed coarse-grained model focusing on C and N metabolisms, which also suggests C transfer from the host diatom to *Richelia* to support the high rate of N₂ fixation [190].

4. Resolved elements in coarse-grained models

Whereas simple equations and detailed-metabolic models have common forms [100,104,106,188,190], coarse-grained models are highly variable due to their flexibility to adapt to different purposes [27,75,83,99,152,153,156,189,190]. One of the key variations is the number and variety of elements resolved in the models. Many models resolve C and N fluxes but fewer models consider P, Fe (Fig. 6) or other elements explicitly. In this section, we review the variation in coarse-grained models based on an elemental (N, P, Fe) and molecular perspective (e.g., O₂, NH₄⁺ and NO₃⁻ (nitrate)) (Fig. 6) since these resources are known to strongly affect the rate of N₂ fixation [25,54,162,210–213].

4.1. C and N fluxes

C and N fluxes are key elements in simulating N₂ fixers since these are major cellular elements [155,214,215]. For heterotrophs, fixed C is acquired from the external environment, whereas for autotrophs, they can use CO₂. C and N are two of the most abundant elements in cells and often growth limiting factors [161,163,216]. H and O are generally abundant in the environment (from H₂O) unless it is arid. As such, C and N have been the central currencies for coarse grained models of N₂ fixers since their inception [27,53,75,152,153] (Fig. 6).

4.2. P fluxes

P (phosphorus) is essential for cellular growth through its role in nucleic acids, ATP, phosphorylation of various molecules, and other purposes [16,17]. The cellular P level is sometimes quantified in experiments with marine nitrogen fixers [36,215,217–219], but not as often as C and N, possibly due to the difficulty in measurements. Thus, the data are still limited and accordingly, coarse-grained models resolving P fluxes are limited (Fig. 6). However, a chemostat culture study provided cellular P of *Crocospaera* [215], and coarse-grained model resolving P has been developed accordingly to the data resolving simplified macromolecular allocation [156]. Also, other optimization models for *Crocospaera* [153] and *Trichodesmium* [99] resolve P fluxes.

4.3. Fe fluxes

Fe is mainly used in photosystems, respiratory complexes, and nitrogenase [56,220]. Thus, it is essential in cellular growth and maintenance despite the fact that the cellular quota of Fe is small relative to C, N and P [221]. Trace metal measurements require particularly clean laboratory techniques and data on Fe have been relatively scarce. Just a few models have explicitly resolved iron physiology in nitrogen fixers, including studies of *Crocospaera* [75,153] and *Trichodesmium* [195] (Fig. 6). Especially, in *Crocospaera*, the intracellular Fe cycling is shown to be closely coupled with C and N metabolisms [75]. One optimization model [153] used data of external Fe concentration for various growth

data [222], to constrain daily average Fe fluxes. Saito et al. estimated Fe allocation from the protein of Fe contents, showing diurnal cycling of Fe between nitrogenase in *Crocospaera* [56]. This was reproduced by a coarse-grained model of this organism which illustrated its role in organizing the diurnal cycling of cellular metabolisms [75]. A model of *Trichodesmium* resolved Fe to study the response to ocean acidification, predicting that the negative effect of ocean acidification on N₂ fixation will be especially severe in Fe-limited regions [195].

4.4. Fluxes and intracellular concentration of O₂

Intracellular O₂ is a key factor in predicting the rate of N₂ fixation since it negatively affects the activity of nitrogenase [54,212]. Despite such importance, the direct measurements of intracellular O₂ are not feasible and models provide a way to interpret the relationship between oxygen and N₂ fixation. Recent models have explored the impact of respiration and photosynthesis on O₂ management by a variety of N₂ fixers. This approach was recently introduced in a coarse-grained model of *Azotobacter* [27,53] (Fig. 6). Based on the O₂ fluxes and the assumption of intracellular anoxia, models predicted the presence of a protective barrier reducing the diffusivity of oxygen across membranes as well as enhanced respiration to control intracellular oxygen, consistent with laboratory studies [53]. A similar approach was applied to *Trichodesmium* [83] and *Crocospaera* [75], suggesting that they also employ a barrier to the invasion of oxygen. These results are supported by the recent observation that N₂ fixing marine cyanobacteria encode for hopanoid lipids, which would reduce the membrane diffusivity [223]. Notably, the model of *Crocospaera* suggests that *Crocospaera* may only survive in high temperature regions (>20 °C), since at lower temperatures respiration rate drops and intracellular O₂ increases [75].

4.5. Fixed N uptake and its influence on N₂ fixation

The uptake of fixed N (e.g., NO₃⁻ and NH₄⁺) has been observed to down-regulate N₂ fixation [25,54,162,210–213] (Note that there are cases that such downregulation does not seem to occur [78,224–226]). Whereas extensive studies have revealed mechanisms of down-regulation [227], the quantitative models resolving this effect have been scarce (Fig. 6). A coarse-grained model of *Anabaena* resolved the growth based on various fixed N species and the process of their assimilation into biomass. The model captured the observed negative correlation between NO₃⁻ and NH₄⁺ uptake and *NifH* (nitrogenase iron protein) level as well as the inhibition of heterocyst differentiation by fixed N [152]. Recently, a coarse-grained model of *Azotobacter* resolved fixed N uptake showing that the rate of N₂ fixation is optimally regulated, so that biomass concentration is maximized [27]. The model suggested that even when entirely growing on fixed N source, this organism still invested in high rates of respiration associated with respiratory protection. Fixed N uptake was included in a coarse-grained model of *Crocospaera* based on chemostat culture data, which shows that N₂ fixation may increase their population despite the presence of NH₄⁺ [156].

5. Remaining challenges

While substantial progress has been made in modeling N₂ fixers, models have plenty of room to improve in mechanistic and taxonomic breadth and detail (Fig. 7). For example, though relative resource supply and demand may be an important factor in determining the fitness of nitrogen fixers, many coarse-grained models do not resolve key elements (e.g., P, Fe). There are many open questions concerning N₂ fixation and the physiology of N₂ fixers

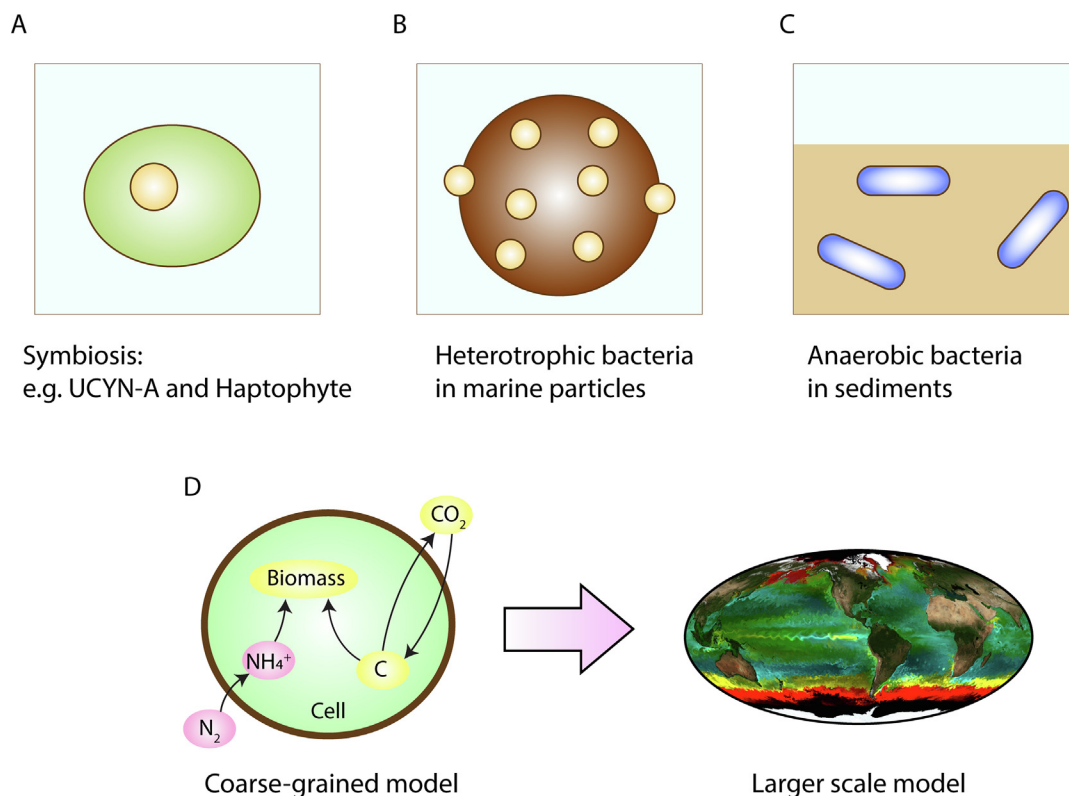


Fig. 7. Some future applications of the physiological models of N_2 fixers. (A)–(C) Organisms that have not been quantitatively modeled. (D) Incorporating coarse-grained models into large-scale simulations. Picture for a large scale model made by Oliver Jahn.

[3,4,9,26,29,31,41,92,228,229] and models have a role to play in hypothesizing and testing novel and quantitative explanations. Some important and physiologically interesting N_2 fixers have not yet been addressed with quantitative models [26,29]. Here we outline some of the outstanding questions and discuss possible future directions in which modeling contributes to addressing them.

5.1. *Trichodesmium paradox*

Trichodesmium fixes N_2 and photosynthesize during the light period [60,192]. This is paradoxical since *Trichodesmium* lacks heterocysts and the nitrogenase is sensitive to the O_2 produced by photosynthesis [54,212]. The activity of PSII (where O_2 is produced) switches on and off with a time scale of minutes [92,230], which would lead nitrogenase to be exposed by O_2 frequently. A recently developed coarse-grained model resolving average metabolism shows that the residence time of O_2 is in a time scale of seconds [83]; thus metabolic switching from photosynthesis to non-photosynthesis with high respiration may deplete the intracellular O_2 quickly. Further modeling to resolve the dynamic regulation of photosynthesis on time scales of minutes may reveal the strategies and associated costs of sustaining N_2 fixation in the marine environment.

It has been suggested that the microzone of low O_2 in a colony of *Trichodesmium* plays a role in supporting N_2 fixation [231]. However, it has been challenged by recent studies that observe higher O_2 in a colony than the environment [232] and higher N_2 fixation rates in a free-floating filament than in a colony [84]. Despite that, there are still cases with lower O_2 in a colony during the middle of the day [84,233] and models would be useful in exploring the low O_2 effect as well as why free-floating filaments have higher rates of N_2 fixation.

5.2. Modeling more organisms and outstanding questions

5.2.1. Symbiosis

N_2 fixers are often found in symbiotic relations [32,165,229,234,235]. Under N limitation, they provide fixed N to the host supporting their growth. In terrestrial systems, *Rhizobium* and *Anabaena* are well known symbionts with plants [4,5,32,234], but physiological models of these symbiotic relationships are still limited. For example, current models focus mostly on the N_2 fixers and may not provide a larger picture of symbiosis and nutrient exchanges. How much C should be transferred to the N_2 fixers for the optimum growth under different conditions? What constrains the rate of N_2 fixation in symbiosis? Are there ways to increase symbiotic N_2 fixation by genetic modification? These are still open questions, and models of various levels may provide quantitative predictions and guide empirical studies.

In marine systems, DDA symbioses have long been known [208,209], but mysteries remain. For example, what molecules do the partners exchange [31,190]? A recently developed coarse-grained model predicts C transfer from the host diatom leading to the hypothesis that some C molecules are pre-processed within diatoms before transfer to the diazotroph [190]. Simulating N_2 fixers and hosts together with genome-scale FBA simulations could yield new insight into the types and rates of exchange that would optimize biomass production, which may be tested with laboratory studies [236].

The recently discovered symbiosis between UCYN-A and haptophyte (related to *Braarudosphaera bigelowii*) [29,228,237,238] (Fig. 7A) has been receiving increasing attention. Recent studies show considerable rates of N_2 fixation and ubiquity of this symbiosis in the global ocean [28,239–241], indicating its potential significance in the global N budget and ecosystems. Despite this, theory and models specific to UCYN-A have not been developed, which

could provide testable hypotheses addressing outstanding questions such as “what molecules are exchanged?”, “how may such molecular exchange vary under different conditions?”, “how does the symbiotic relationship give an advantage over non-symbiotic N_2 fixers?” and “why are symbiotic relationships specific?”. Genetic data provide useful qualitative information in modeling the symbiosis. For example, a genetic study revealed a lack of PSII and TCA and Calvin cycles in UCYN-A [242], which can be represented both in coarse-grained models or more detailed metabolic models.

5.2.2. Marine heterotrophic bacteria

More and more genetic studies show that *nifH* gene for heterotrophic bacteria is ubiquitous [26,243–246]. However, these studies do not always confirm substantial active N_2 fixation by these organisms, but such potential has been suggested [26,247]. What is the contribution to global fixation, why is this functionality so universal, and what are the conditions that allow heterotrophic bacteria to fix N_2 ? Marine organic particles (Fig. 7B) have been thought to be loci for N_2 fixation by these organisms [26,27,248,249]. Particles contain high fixed N, which may suppress N_2 fixation [25,210,211], but would there be a window of time when fixed nitrogen is depleted and N_2 fixation occurs? Or do they fix N_2 when the ambient concentration of fixed N is high? Alternatively, respiration in organic particles can provide anoxic microenvironments that circumvent the O_2 management problem that N_2 fixers face in the surface ocean [250]. These questions may be quantitatively answered based on a coarse-grained model [27] combined with a simulation of particle environment [251]. In addition to the particles, benthic microbial mats may also provide low O_2 environment [252,253], which would also favor N_2 fixation by heterotrophic bacteria. Physiological model of N_2 fixers in the context of molecular diffusion in the benthic mat would be useful in quantifying the threshold and the rates for this process.

5.2.3. Anaerobic nitrogen-fixing bacteria

Anaerobic bacteria are also of interest for modeling (Fig. 7C), they mainly exist in sediments or hypersaline environments where O_2 concentration is low [25,41]. In such environments, O_2 is not a major problem for anaerobic N_2 fixers such as *Clostridium* [41]. How much advantage does the anaerobic environment give to N_2 fixers? What controls the rate of N_2 fixation? What mechanisms and conditions allow for N_2 fixation? In sediments, significant amounts of NH_4^+ are detected, but anaerobic N_2 fixation still seems to occur [25,41,210,211,254–256]. Models can help to resolve these questions by quantifying the costs, benefits, and trade-offs of N_2 fixation in these environments.

5.3. Application of coarse-grained models in larger scale simulations

In large scale ecological models, simple equations are used to represent physiologies of N_2 fixers [101,104,106,107,114,129]. However, as for any model, this approach has some limitations. First, such models may not consider the intracellular concentration of O_2 , which can have a significant impact on N_2 fixation [54,75]. Second, models generally assume intracellular properties are constant, while in reality they change with the environment (e.g., elemental stoichiometry [85,215,218]). Furthermore, these models generally do not consider the effect of fixed N in the environment (e.g., decreased N_2 fixation due to the presence of NH_4^+). One possible solution is to include coarse-grained models into larger-scale models (Fig. 7D). The coarse-grained models lie in a sweet spot between level of detail and computational efficiency and have potential to resolve essential cellular properties [150]. Efforts in this direction have already been started [105], and more modeling tools have been developed (e.g., Cell Flux Models [27,53,75,83])

that can be incorporated in the next generation of ecological models, both for marine and terrestrial systems. Since coarse-grained models require higher numbers of equations and parameters than those of simple equations, constraining them will require continued expansion and curation of accessible laboratory data.

6. Enhancing collaboration between theory and observation

Modeling and experiments are complementary to each other (Fig. 8). Experiments are essential in discovering new phenomena and developing conceptual understanding. They provide the quantitative data that is essential for testing theories and constraining parameterizations. Models are often useful for synthesizing and organizing understanding, interpreting observed phenomena, as well as stimulating new hypotheses and testable predictions. An increasing number of studies combine these two different types of approaches, but its considerable potential remains only partly realized. In this section, hoping to stimulate more of such collaborations, we describe two types of model-experiment collaborations (Fig. 8) and list examples of useful data for developing models (Fig. 9).

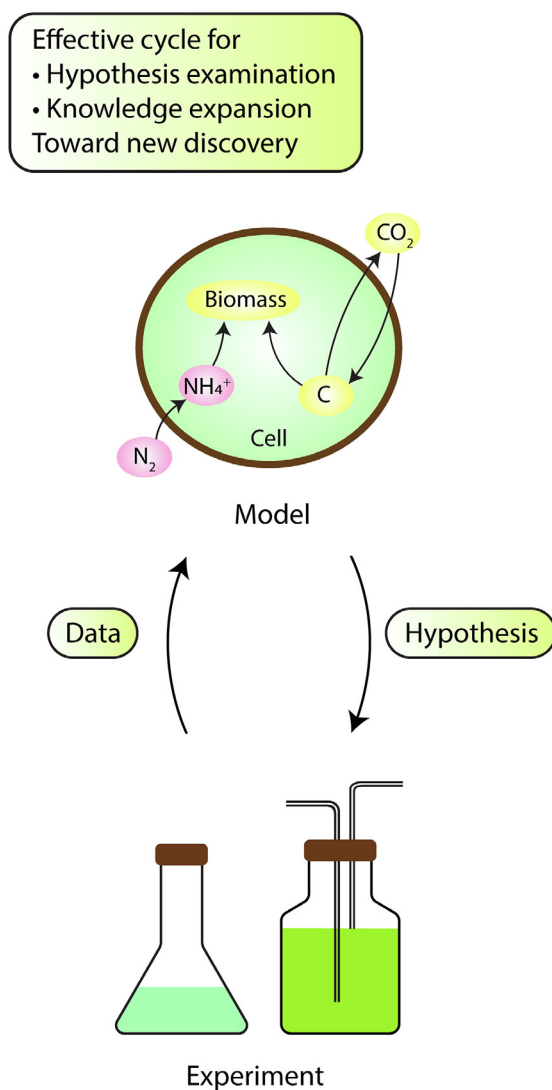
6.1. Experiment-model cycles

One type of collaboration is the experiment-model cycle (Fig. 8A). Experiment provides ingredients for computational models which produce new, testable hypotheses stimulating further experimentation. Also, in time, model predictions can be tested by experimental measurements, which may lead to modification of modeling. This type of cycle was proposed for Systems Biology during the beginning of the 21st century [257,258] and applies to N_2 fixers as well. For example, based on laboratory data, coarse-grained models suggested the existence of a strong barrier for O_2 diffusion [75,83], which can be experimentally tested by analyzing the properties of cellular membrane. In fact, the supporting evidence has been shown recently with genetics study [223]. Based on the cellular-size information from observation, a coarse-grained model of DDAs suggested the existence of significant C transfer from the host diatom to N_2 fixer in DDA [190]. This model-derived hypothesis may also be tested, for example, with NanoSIMS experiments (a technique for visualizing spatial patterns of elemental accumulations [28,191,259,260]), which in turn may change model parameterization. This cycle leads to the deep, robust, and mechanistic understanding of the cellular system of N_2 fixers.

6.2. Experiment-model synthesis

Another type of collaboration is a rather simple one-time combination of experiment and model, which provides theory and quantitative implications (Fig. 8B). This can be applied when the model results may not be tested by experiment easily or when technical barriers preclude experimental tests. For example, a recent NanoSIMS study showed heterogeneity in multiple types of unicellular N_2 -fixing cyanobacteria (some cells fix N_2 and others do not), based on which a coarse-grained model was developed, showing that such heterogeneity reduces C costs and expands the depth niche on N_2 fixers in the open ocean [191]. This model prediction is hard to test in observation or experiments, since we still do not know how to experimentally modulate the number of active cells. Based on a batch culture study, another coarse-grained model was developed showing that respiration rate drops with temperature, which in turn leads to increase in O_2 concentration in the cell, reducing the rate of N_2 fixation [75]. This hypothesis is rather difficult to test, as intracellular O_2 may not be measured with current techniques. In these cases, models are used to complement experiments, expanding the view/implication based on quantitative theories.

A: Experiment-Model cycle



B: Experiment-Model synthesis

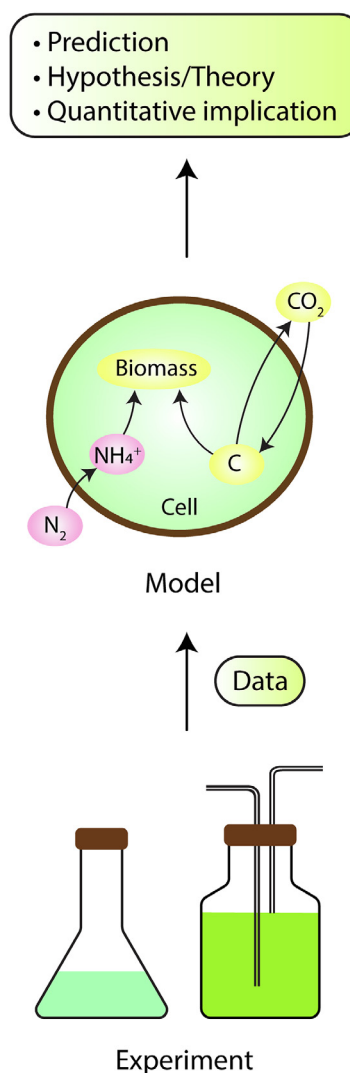


Fig. 8. Proposed collaborative schemes between modelers and biologists when studying N_2 fixation. (A) Model-experiment cycling. (B) Experiment-model synthesis (linear flow). (A) is when model-based hypotheses are testable and (B) is when otherwise. Figure inspired by [257,258].

6.3. Examples of useful experimental methods

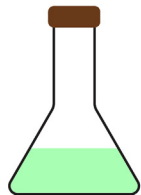
6.3.1. Chemostat culture

Chemostat culture is a widely used method providing essential data for quantitative models (Fig. 9A). Its strength is based on that the steady state is created in the culture where the cellular growth rate is known from the dilution rate (flow rate of the medium) [157,159,261]. Since the growth rate and steady state condition are useful factors in constraining all types of models, the data from chemostat culture have been widely used in modeling studies [58,157,159,161–163,192,215,262–264] because the steady state makes for mathematically simple and tractable models. In particular, many of the coarse-grained models have been developed based on chemostat data [27,53,98,99,152,153,156]. The method can be labor intensive [159] and technically challenging, limiting the number of available data. However, the method has high value for the development of coarse-grained models.

6.3.2. Batch culture

In batch cultures a nutrient-rich medium is inoculated with live cells whose population grows and consumes the resources [211,217,265–267] (Fig. 9A). Over time, the nutrients are depleted and population growth slows. The strength of this method is its simplicity relative to the chemostat culture. The environment within the culture changes continuously, so time-dependent models are required to simulate and interpret these experiments. However, for models built on a dynamical framework that captures time-dependent biological responses [75,99,152,153], the batch culture data can be of great use. If acclimation occurs sufficiently rapidly that cellular composition stays close to optimal over the time-course of the experiment, we might use a quasi-steady state modeling approach to represent the physiology. There have been efforts to adapt FBA to dynamic situations [147,148,268] and this approach has started to be applied to N_2 fixers [149].

A: Examples of useful classic methods



Batch culture



Chemostat culture

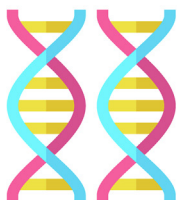


In-Situ Observation

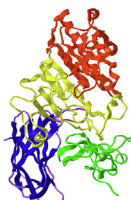
B: Examples of useful parameters

- Cell size
- O₂ level
- CO₂ level
- Temperature
- Nutrient concentration
- Growth rate
- Cell count
- Cellular elemental stoichiometry (e.g., C:N:P:Fe)
- Chlorophyll
- N₂ fixation rate
- Photosynthesis rate
- Macromolecules (e.g. Carbohydrate, Protein, Lipid, DNA, RNA, Polyphosphate).

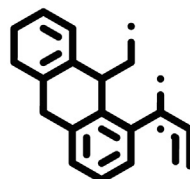
C: Emerging useful technologies



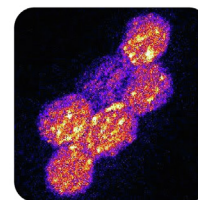
Genomics



Proteomics



Metabolomics



NanoSIMS

Fig. 9. A list of biological experiments and data important for modeling N₂ fixation. (A) Culturing and sampling methods. (B) List of useful parameters from (A). (C) Emerging technologies that are potentially useful for the models.

6.3.3. Observation (field measurements)

Field observations and *in situ* measurements (Fig. 9A) are highly valuable for modeling. However, the environment is highly complex and often challenging to use such data for model parameterization for individual organisms. For example, in the ocean, microbial populations are very diverse and mixed. However, combinations of technologies such as meta-'omics', [269–275] flow cytometry [225,238,276], FISH (Fluorescent *In Situ* Hybridization) [28,225,238,277] and NanoSIMS [28,207,225,259,260] allow observation and parametrization down to the level of individual cells. Surveys of biogeochemical fluxes including N₂ fixation can be compiled for comparison with larger-scale ocean and terrestrial ecosystem simulations [101,102,104,106]. Global coverage of rates of N₂ fixation is still sparse [88,89,278], but recent technological development allows high-frequency measurements of N₂ fixation [86,279], allowing for rapidly increasing data coverage over time and space scales of the ocean.

6.4. Examples of useful parameters

Models can help select and prioritize the key parameters for which laboratory studies and field observations are most needed to resolve outstanding questions, as illustrated in Fig. 9B. Cell size provides hints for diffusivity of O₂ into the cell [53,66,83,84] as well as approximates cellular compositions [280–282]. To quantify O₂ fluxes and intracellular O₂, data on O₂ concentrations in the culture/environment are useful [61,84,232]. CO₂ level is also important for photosynthetic organisms as it may affect the rate of photosynthesis and thus O₂ evolution [35,283]. Unless testing the effect of CO₂ limitation, it is preferred that CO₂ is pumped in the culture to avoid the negative effect of CO₂ limitation on photosynthesis, as such effect would make the model parameterization complex. Temperature is another important factor as it affects the molecular diffusion [284,285] and cellular metabolisms [286–288]. Growth rate is a known parameter for chemostat cultures

[157,159,261], but it is also important for batch cultures, since many model outputs are related to growth rates (e.g., N_2 fixation, respiration, photosynthesis, elemental stoichiometry [158,161,215,264,289,290]). Cell concentration is required if it is necessary to obtain per cell values such as elemental or molecular mass. Cellular elemental stoichiometry provides the cellular demand for each nutrient for a specific growth rate [58,215,218]. It is known to vary with growth rate, thus, values for multiple growth rates are ideal (preferably at least 3 growth rates in case the relation is non-linear) [158,215,291]. For photosynthetic N_2 fixers (e.g., *Anabaena*, *Crocospaera*, *Trichodesmium*), the photosynthesis-related parameters such as cellular content of chlorophyll [215,264] and the rate of photosynthesis [85,192,287] are useful as photosynthesis produces fixed C essential for cellular growth and metabolisms as well as O_2 , which is detrimental to N_2 fixation. The rate of N_2 fixation is the essence of N_2 fixers and certainly is useful. More recent models include macromolecular allocations [121,156,191] and related data, such as the levels of lipid, carbohydrate, chlorophyll, protein and nucleic acids [123,144,292] are useful in testing the model output from these types models. Different studies use different units for output data: some use per chlorophyll [192,219,293,294], other use per C or N [35,213,262], per cell [58,85,264,295], per cellular volume [215] or per cell suspension volume (e.g., seawater) [218]. Ideally, these units are inter-convertible and, for this, the values for chlorophyll per cell, C and N per cell, and cellular concentration are valuable. Especially, chlorophyll content is highly variable [158,215,264,296,297] and the data for chlorophyll (per cell or per C) would be of great use if the data are to be presented per chlorophyll.

6.5. Emerging experimental methods and data

Technological and experimental advancements provide new types of data available for model development (Fig. 9C). Proteomics and genomics indicate the presence of metabolic pathways, which provide a basis for FBA [100,188]; FBA predicts a metabolic flux network (and thus the partition of fluxes at metabolic branch-points) based on possible sets of reactions informed from these 'omics studies and the flux optimization for selected purposes (e.g., maximizing biomass production) [100,137,138,149,188]. The information from genomics can also be useful for coarse-grained models, since the model can selectively reflect distinct metabolic patterns [242]. Proteomics can reveal the allocation to enzymes that mediate key functions such as N_2 fixation and photosynthesis [56], which have been resolved in some models [75,99,152,153,186]. Also, some coarse-grained models coarsely resolve protein allocation and could be better constrained with more proteomics data. In the future, the rapidly advancing capability to measure the presence and relative abundance of metabolites, known as metabolomics [298,299], may complement FBA models, together leading to quantification of both metabolites and metabolic fluxes.

Sitting in between genomics and proteomics is transcriptomics, providing the quantitative information for the level of specific mRNAs [271,274,275]. Since a large part of mRNAs are used for protein synthesis, transcriptomics provides implication for what proteins are expressed/used within the cell. This measurement may not strictly predict the level of proteins, since it does not provide information for the destruction of proteins (e.g., protein turnover [300]). Despite that, this technology has been widely used due to low cost and low time requirement relative to proteomics.

Furthermore, metabolomics may be used to approximate the composition of macromolecules, which would be useful in constraining coarse-grained models that resolve macromolecular allocations. For example, comprehensive measurements of cellular

amino acids [301] may be useful in estimating the level of cellular proteins. Finally, NanoSIMS technology provides useful data in elemental accumulation at (sub)cellular levels [28,191,259,260], essential in modeling heterogeneous cellular activities [191], providing another layer of detail in modeling at any scale.

7. Summary and outlook

Overall, each type of model - simple equations, coarse-grained, and detailed metabolic models - has its own strength and can be applied to different problems. The coarse-grained type has been applied to a wide range of applications and provided many new insights, and still holds potential for further development. Proper experimental data are essential for any type of modeling, and both classic parameters and more recent technologies provide useful information. Experiments and models are complementary and provide powerful synthesis of quantitative measurements and theory. This synthetic approach has been rapidly expanding. With such model-experiment synthesis, models can be expanded to cover different diazotrophic organisms, such as UCYN-A, marine heterotrophic N_2 -fixers, and anaerobic N_2 fixers. As the emerging class of coarse-grained models are incorporated into large-scale models, we expect a rapid development and expansion of predictive skill and understanding of the interactions between microbial ecosystems, biogeochemistry, and climate.

Author contributions

K.I. wrote the original draft, which was reviewed and edited by all the co-authors. The project was administered by K.I. and T.M. and supervised by C.D., O.P. and M.J.F. All the co-authors contributed to funding acquisition.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Acknowledgements

We thank Lasse Riemann, Subhendu Chakraborty, Jonathan P. Zehr, Meri Eichner, Samuel T. Wilson, Takuhei Shiozaki, Xinning Zhang, and Stephanie Dutkiewicz for useful discussion and Oliver Jahn for help with figures. This research was supported by the Simons Foundation (Simons Postdoctoral Fellowship in Marine Microbial Ecology, Award 544338, K.I.; Simons Collaboration on Computational Biogeochemical Modeling of Marine Ecosystems, CBIOMES, Award 549931, M.J.F.), the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation (GBMF 3775, C.D.), and Grant Agency of the Czech Republic (GACR 20-17627S, O.P. and T.M.). We are grateful for the support. We acknowledge the use of icons from flaticon.com based on the guideline: Icon made by Freepik from www.flaticon.com, Icon made by Smashicons from www.flaticon.com, Icon made by mynamepong from www.flaticon.com, Icon made by Vitaly Gorbachev from www.flaticon.com, Icon made by ultimatearm from www.flaticon.com, Icon made by Flat Icons from www.flaticon.com, and Icon made by Eucalyp from www.flaticon.com. The image of the monitor in the graphical abstract was designed by Freepik.

References

- [1] Gruber N, Galloway JN. An Earth-system perspective of the global nitrogen cycle. *Nature* 2008;451:293–6.

- [2] Sohm JA, Webb EA, Capone DG. Emerging patterns of marine nitrogen fixation. *Nat Rev Microbiol* 2011;9:499–508.
- [3] Zehr JP, Capone DG. Changing perspectives in marine nitrogen fixation. *Science* 2020;368:eaay9514.
- [4] Vitousek PM, Cassman K, Cleveland C, Crews T, Field CB, Grimm NB, et al. Towards an ecological understanding of biological nitrogen fixation. *Biogeochemistry* 2002;57(58):1–45.
- [5] van Rhijn P, Vanderleyden J. The Rhizobium-plant symbiosis. *FEMS Microbiol Rev* 1995;59:124–42.
- [6] Patriarca EJ, Tatè R, Iaccarino M. Key role of bacterial NH₄⁺ metabolism in Rhizobium-plant symbiosis. *Microbiol Mol Biol Rev* 2002;66:203–22.
- [7] Herridge DF, Peoples MB, Boddey RM. Global inputs of biological nitrogen fixation in agricultural systems. *Plant Soil* 2008;311:1–18.
- [8] Bohlool BB, Ladha JK, Garrity DP, Georg T. Biological nitrogen fixation for sustainable agriculture: a perspective. *Plant Soil* 1992;141:1–11.
- [9] Noar JD, Bruno-Bárceña JM. Azotobacter vinelandii: the source of 100 years of discoveries and many more to come. *Microbiol (United Kingdom)* 2018;164:421–36.
- [10] Peoples MB, Herridge DF, Ladha JK. Biological nitrogen fixation: an efficient source of nitrogen for sustainable agricultural production?. *Plant Soil* 1995;174:3–28.
- [11] Karl D, Letelier R, Tupas L, Dore J, Christian J, Hebel D. The role of nitrogen fixation in biogeochemical cycling in the subtropical North Pacific Ocean. *Nature* 1997;388:533–8.
- [12] Singh A, Gandhi N, Ramesh R. Surplus supply of bioavailable nitrogen through N₂ fixation to primary producers in the eastern Arabian Sea during autumn. *Cont Shelf Res* 2019;181:103–10.
- [13] Kuypers MMM, Marchant HK, Kartal B. The microbial nitrogen-cycling network. *Nat Rev Microbiol* 2018;16:263–76.
- [14] Karl DM, Church MJ, Dore JE, Letelier RM, Mahaffey C. Predictable and efficient carbon sequestration in the North Pacific Ocean supported by symbiotic nitrogen fixation. *PNAS* 2012;109:1842–9.
- [15] Shiozaki T, Bombar D, Riemann L, Sato M, Hashihama F, Kodama T, et al. Linkage between dinitrogen fixation and primary production in the oligotrophic South Pacific Ocean. *Global Biogeochem Cycles* 2018;32:1028–44.
- [16] Berg JM, Tymoczko JL, Stryer L. *Biochemistry*. 7th edition. New York: and Company; 2010.
- [17] Michal G. *Biochemical pathways: an atlas of biochemistry and molecular biology*. Heidelberg: Wiley & Spektrum; 1999.
- [18] Lengeler JW, Drews G, Schlegel HG. *Biology of the prokaryotes*. Stuttgart: Thieme; 1999.
- [19] Madigan MT, Martinko JM, Parker J (2000.) *Brock Biology of Microorganisms*. 9th edition. Prentice-Hall, inc.: Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.
- [20] Jungermann K, Kirchniawy H, Katz N, Thauer RK. NADH, a physiological electron donor in clostridial nitrogen fixation. *FEBS Lett* 1974;43:203–6.
- [21] Chen Y-P, Yoch DC. Reconstitution of the electron transport system that couples formate oxidation to nitrogenase in *Methylosinus trichosporium* OB3b. *J Gen Microbiol* 1988;134:3123–8.
- [22] Klucas RV, Evans HJ. An electron donor system for nitrogenase-dependent acetylene reduction by extracts of soybean nodules. *Plant Physiol* 1968;43:1458–60.
- [23] Seefeldt LC, Hoffman BM, Dean DR. Mechanism of mo-dependent nitrogenase. *Annu Rev Biochem* 2009;78:701–22.
- [24] Seefeldt LC, Yang ZY, Lukoyanov DA, Harris DF, Dean DR, Raugei S, et al. Reduction of substrates by nitrogenases. *Chem Rev* 2020;120:5082–106.
- [25] Capone DG (1988.) *Benthic nitrogen fixation*. In: Blackburn, T.H. and Sorensen, J., eds. *Nitrogen Cycling in Coastal Marine Environments*. pp. 85–123.
- [26] Bombar D, Paerl RW, Riemann L. Marine non-cyanobacterial diazotrophs: moving beyond molecular detection. *Trends Microbiol* 2016;24:916–27.
- [27] Inomura K, Bragg J, Riemann L, Follows MJ. A quantitative model of nitrogen fixation in the presence of ammonium. *PLoS ONE* 2018;13:e0208282.
- [28] Martínez-Pérez C, Mohr W, Löscher CR, Dekaezemaker J, Littmann S, Yilmaz P, et al. The small unicellular diazotrophic symbiont, UCYN-A, is a key player in the marine nitrogen cycle. *Nat Microbiol* 2016;1:1–7.
- [29] Zehr JP, Shilova IN, Farnelid HM, Muñoz-Marincarmen M del C, Turk-Kubo KA (2016) Unusual marine unicellular symbiosis with the nitrogen-fixing cyanobacterium UCYN-A. *Nat Microbiol*. 2: 16214.
- [30] Udvardi M, Poole PS. Transport and metabolism in legume-rhizobia symbioses. *Annu Rev Plant Biol* 2013;64:781–805.
- [31] Nieves-Morión M, Flores E, Foster RA. Predicting substrate exchange in marine diatom-heterocystous cyanobacteria symbioses. *Environ Microbiol* 2020;22:2027–52.
- [32] Rai AN, Bergman B. Cyanobacterium-plant symbiosis. *New Phytol* 2000;147:449–81.
- [33] Berman-Frank I, Cullen JT, Shaked Y, Sherrell RM, Falkowski PG. Iron availability, cellular iron quotas, and nitrogen fixation in *Trichodesmium*. *Limnol Oceanogr* 2001;46:1249–60.
- [34] Ward BA, Dutkiewicz S, Moore CM, Follows MJ. Iron, phosphorus, and nitrogen supply ratios define the biogeography of nitrogen fixation. *Limnol Oceanogr* 2013;58:2059–75.
- [35] Fu F-X, Mulholland MR, Garcia NS, Beck A, Bernhardt PW, Warner ME, et al. Interactions between changing pCO₂, N₂ fixation, and Fe limitation in the marine unicellular cyanobacterium *Crocospaera*. *Limnol Oceanogr* 2008;53:2472–84.
- [36] Sañudo-Wilhelmy SA, Kustka AB, Gobler CJ, Hutchins DA, Yang M, Lwiza K, et al. Phosphorus limitation of nitrogen fixation by *Trichodesmium* in the central Atlantic Ocean. *Nature* 2001;411:66–9.
- [37] Crews TE, Farrington H, Vitousek PM. Changes in asymbiotic, heterotrophic nitrogen fixation on leaf litter of *Metrosideros polymorpha* with long-term ecosystem development in Hawaii. *Ecosystems* 2000;3:386–95.
- [38] Vitousek PM, Porder S, Houlton BZ, Chadwick OA. Terrestrial phosphorus limitation: mechanisms, implications, and nitrogen-phosphorus interactions. *Ecol Appl* 2010;20:5–15.
- [39] Eady RR. Structure-function relationships of alternative nitrogenases. *Chem Rev* 1996;96:3013–30.
- [40] Darnajoux R, Magain N, Renaudin M, Lutzoni F, Bellenger JP, Zhang X. Molybdenum threshold for ecosystem scale alternative vanadium nitrogenase activity in boreal forests. *PNAS* 2019;116:24682–8.
- [41] Zhang X, Ward BB, Sigman DM. Global nitrogen cycle: critical enzymes, organisms, and processes for nitrogen budgets and dynamics. *Chem Rev* 2020;120:5308–51.
- [42] Zhang X, McRose DL, Darnajoux R, Bellenger JP, Morel FMM, L KAM (2016) Alternative nitrogenase activity in the environment and nitrogen cycle implications. *Biogeochem Lett*. 127: 189–198.
- [43] Dyhrman ST, Haley ST. Phosphorus scavenging in the unicellular marine diazotroph *Crocospaera watsonii*. *Appl Environ Microbiol* 2006;72:1452–8.
- [44] Polyviou D, Baylay AJ, Hitchcock A, Robidart J, Moore CM, Bibby TS. Desert dust as a source of iron to the globally important diazotroph *Trichodesmium*. *Front Microbiol* 2018;8:2683.
- [45] Hopkinson BM, Barbeau KA. Iron transporters in marine prokaryotic genomes and metagenomes. *Environ Microbiol* 2012;14:114–28.
- [46] Dyhrman ST, Chappell PD, Haley ST, Moffett JW, Orchard ED, Waterbury JB, et al. Phosphonate utilization by the globally important marine diazotroph *Trichodesmium*. *Nature* 2006;439:68–71.
- [47] Rubin M, Berman-Frank I, Shaked Y. Dust-and mineral-iron utilization by the marine dinitrogen-fixer *Trichodesmium*. *Nat Geosci* 2011;4:529–34.
- [48] Benavides M, Duhamel S, Van Wambeke F, Shoemaker KM, Moisaner PH, Salamon E, et al. Dissolved organic matter stimulates N₂ fixation and nifH gene expression in *Trichodesmium*. *FEMS Microbiol Lett* 2020;367:1–8.
- [49] Achilles KM, Church TM, Wilhelm SW, Luther GW, Hutchins DA. Bioavailability of iron to *Trichodesmium* colonies in the western subtropical Atlantic Ocean. *Limnol Oceanogr* 2003;48:2250–5.
- [50] Basu S, Gledhill M, de Beer D, Prabhu Matondkar SG, Shaked Y. Colonies of marine cyanobacteria *Trichodesmium* interact with associated bacteria to acquire iron from dust. *Commun Biol* 2019;2:1–8.
- [51] Roe KL, Barbeau KA. Uptake mechanisms for inorganic iron and ferric citrate in *Trichodesmium erythraeum* IMS101. *Metallomics* 2014;6:2042–51.
- [52] Hopkinson BM, Morel FMM. The role of siderophores in iron acquisition by photosynthetic marine microorganisms. *Biometals* 2009;22:659–69.
- [53] Inomura K, Bragg J, Follows MJ. A quantitative analysis of the direct and indirect costs of nitrogen fixation: a model based on *Azotobacter vinelandii*. *ISME J* 2017;11:166–75.
- [54] Gallon JR. The oxygen sensitivity of nitrogenase: a problem for biochemists and micro-organisms. *Trends Biochem Sci* 1981;6:19–23.
- [55] Dalton H, Postgate JR. Effect of oxygen on growth of *Azotobacter chroococcum* in batch and continuous cultures. *J Gen Microbiol* 1968;54:463–73.
- [56] Saito MA, Bertrand EM, Dutkiewicz S, Bulygin VV, Moran DM, Monteiro FM, et al. Iron conservation by reduction of metalloenzyme inventories in the marine diazotroph *Crocospaera watsonii*. *PNAS* 2011;108:2184–9.
- [57] Mohr W, Intermaggio MP, LaRoche J. Diel rhythm of nitrogen and carbon metabolism in the unicellular, diazotrophic cyanobacterium *Crocospaera watsonii* WH8501. *Environ Microbiol* 2010;12:412–21.
- [58] Dron A, Rabouille S, Claquin P, Roy B, Talec A, Sciandra A. Light-dark (12:12) cycle of carbon and nitrogen metabolism in *Crocospaera watsonii* WH8501: relation to the cell cycle. *Environ Microbiol* 2012;14:967–81.
- [59] Reddy KJ, Haskell JB, Sherman DM, Sherman LA. Unicellular, aerobic nitrogen-fixing cyanobacteria of the genus *Cyanothece*. *J Bacteriol* 1993;175:1284–92.
- [60] Berman-Frank I, Lundgren P, Falkowski P. Nitrogen fixation and photosynthetic oxygen evolution in cyanobacteria. *Res Microbiol* 2003;154:157–64.
- [61] Wilson ST, Tozzi S, Foster RA, Ilikchyan I, Kolber ZS, Zehr JP, et al. Hydrogen cycling by the unicellular marine diazotroph *Crocospaera watsonii* strain WH8501. *Appl Environ Microbiol* 2010;76:6797–803.
- [62] Popp R, Weber PK, Pett-Ridge J, Finzi JA, Fallon SJ, Hutcheon ID, et al. Carbon and nitrogen fixation and metabolite exchange in and between individual cells of *Anabaena oscillarioides*. *ISME J* 2007;1:354–60.
- [63] Kellar PE, Goldman CR. A comparative study of nitrogen fixation by the *Anabaena-Azolla* symbiosis and free-living populations of *Anabaena* spp. in Lake Ngahawa. *New Zealand Oceanologia* 1979;43:269–81.
- [64] Fay P. Oxygen relations of nitrogen fixation in cyanobacteria. *Microbiol Rev* 1992;56:340–73.
- [65] Flores E, Herrero A. Compartmentalized function through cell differentiation in filamentous cyanobacteria. *Nat Rev Microbiol* 2010;8:39–50.
- [66] Staal M, Meysman FJR, Stal LJ. Temperature excludes N₂-fixing heterocystous cyanobacteria in the tropical oceans. *Nature* 2003;425:504–7.
- [67] MacDougall JDB, McCabe M. Diffusion coefficient of oxygen through tissues. *Nature* 1967;215:1173–4.

- [68] Robertson JE, Watson AJ, Langdon C, Ling RD, Wood JW. Diurnal variation in surface pCO₂ and O₂ at 60°N, 20°W in the North Atlantic. *Deep-Sea Res Part II* 1993;40:409–22.
- [69] Yates KK, Dufore C, Smiley N, Jackson C, Halley RB. Diurnal variation of oxygen and carbonate system parameters in Tampa Bay and Florida Bay. *Mar Chem* 2007;104:110–24.
- [70] Fransson A, Chierici M, Anderson LG. Diurnal variability in the oceanic carbon dioxide system and oxygen in the Southern Ocean surface water. *Deep-Sea Res Part II* 2004;51:2827–39.
- [71] Russel EJ, Appleyard A. The atmosphere of the soil: its composition and the causes of variation. *J Agric Sci* 1915;7:1–48.
- [72] Sabra W, Zeng AP, Lünsdorf H, Deckwer WD. Effect of oxygen on formation and structure of *Azotobacter vinelandii* alginate and its role in protecting nitrogenase. *Appl Environ Microbiol* 2000;66:4037–44.
- [73] Walsby AE. Cyanobacterial heterocysts: terminal pores proposed as sites of gas exchange. *Trends Microbiol* 2007;15:340–9.
- [74] Poole RK, Hill S. Respiratory protection of nitrogenase activity in *Azotobacter vinelandii*-Roles of the terminal oxidases. *Biosci Rep* 1997;17:303–17.
- [75] Inomura K, Deutsch C, Wilson ST, Masuda T, Lawrenz E, Bučinská L, et al. Quantifying oxygen management and temperature and light dependencies of nitrogen fixation by *Crocospaera watsonii*. *mSphere* 2019;4. e00531–19.
- [76] Howarth RW, Marino R, Lane J, Cole JJ. Nitrogen fixation in freshwater, estuarine, and marine ecosystems. 1 Rates and importance. *Limnol Oceanogr* 1988;33:669–87.
- [77] Gier J, Sommer S, Löscher CR, Dale AW, Schmitz RA, Treude T. Nitrogen fixation in sediments along a depth transect through the Peruvian oxygen minimum zone. *Biogeosciences* 2016;13:4065–80.
- [78] Fernandez C, Fan L, Ulloa O. Nitrogen fixation in denitrified marine waters. *PLoS ONE* 2011;6:e20539.
- [79] Tjepkema JD, Yocum CS. Measurement of oxygen partial pressure within soybean nodules by oxygen microelectrodes. *Planta (Berl)* 1974;119:351–60.
- [80] Tjepkema JD. Oxygen concentration within the nitrogen-fixing root nodules of *Myrica gale* L. *Am J Bot* 1983;70:59–63.
- [81] Wang D, Xu A, Elmerich C, Ma LZ. Biofilm formation enables free-living nitrogen-fixing rhizobacteria to fix nitrogen under aerobic conditions. *ISME J* 2017;11:1602–13.
- [82] Castillo T, López I, Flores C, Segura D, García A, Galindo E, et al. Oxygen uptake rate in algal producer (algU+) and nonproducer (algU-) strains of *Azotobacter vinelandii* under nitrogen-fixation conditions. *J Appl Microbiol* 2018;125:181–9.
- [83] Inomura K, Wilson ST, Deutsch C. Mechanistic model for the coexistence of nitrogen fixation and photosynthesis in marine *Trichodesmium*. *mSystems* 2019;4:e00210–19.
- [84] Eichner M, Thoms S, Rost B, Mohr W, Ahmerkamp S, Ploug H, et al. N₂ fixation in free-floating filaments of *Trichodesmium* is higher than in transiently suboxic colony microenvironments. *New Phytol* 2019;222:852–63.
- [85] Großkopf T, LaRoche J. Direct and indirect costs of dinitrogen fixation in *Crocospaera watsonii* WH8501 and possible implications for the nitrogen cycle. *Front Microbiol* 2012;3:236.
- [86] Tang W, Wang S, Fonseca-Batista D, Dehairs F, Gifford S, Gonzalez AG, et al. Revisiting the distribution of oceanic N₂ fixation and estimating diazotrophic contribution to marine production. *Nat Commun* 2019;10:1–10.
- [87] Tang W, Li Z, Cassar N. Machine learning estimates of global marine nitrogen fixation. *J Geophys Res Biogeosciences* 2019;124:717–30.
- [88] Luo Y-W, Lima ID, Karl DM, Deutsch CA, Doney SC. Data-based assessment of environmental controls on global marine nitrogen fixation. *Biogeosciences* 2014;11:691–708.
- [89] Cleveland CC, Townsend AR, Schimel DS, Fisher H, Howarth RW, Hedin LO, et al. Global patterns of terrestrial biological nitrogen (N₂) fixation in natural ecosystems. *Global Biogeochem Cycles* 1999;13:623–45.
- [90] Galloway JN, Dentener FJ, Capone DG, Boyer EW, Howarth RW, Seitzinger SP, et al. Nitrogen cycles: past, present, and future. *Biogeochemistry* 2004;70:153–226.
- [91] Capone DG, Zehr JP, Paerl HW, Bergman B, Carpenter EJ. *Trichodesmium*, a globally significant marine cyanobacterium. *Science* 1997;276:1221–9.
- [92] Zehr JP. Nitrogen fixation by marine cyanobacteria. *Trends Microbiol* 2011;19:162–73.
- [93] Mohr W, Großkopf T, Wallace DWR, LaRoche J. Methodological underestimation of oceanic nitrogen fixation rates. *PLoS ONE* 2010;5:e12583.
- [94] Minchin FR, Witty JF, Sheehy JE, Müller M. A major error in the acetylene reduction assay: decreases in nodular nitrogenase activity under assay conditions. *J Exp Bot* 1983;34:641–9.
- [95] Minchin FR, Sheehy JE, Witty JF. Further errors in the acetylene reduction assay: effects of plant disturbance. *J Exp Bot* 1986;37:1581–91.
- [96] Witty JF, Minchin FR (1988) Measurement of nitrogen fixation by the acetylene reduction assay; myths and mysteries. In: Beck D.P., Materon L.A. (eds.) *Nitrogen Fixation by Legumes in Mediterranean Agriculture*. Developments in Plant and Soil Sciences, vol 32. Springer, Dordrecht. : 331–344.
- [97] Lee KK, Watanabe I. Problems of the acetylene reduction technique applied to water-saturated paddy soils. *Appl Environ Microbiol* 1977;34:654–60.
- [98] Grimaud GM, Rabouille S, Dron A, Scianarra A, Bernard O. Modelling the dynamics of carbon – nitrogen metabolism in the unicellular diazotrophic cyanobacterium *Crocospaera watsonii* WH8501, under variable light regimes. *Ecol Modell* 2014;291:121–33.
- [99] Pahlow M, Dietze H, Oschlies A. Optimality-based model of phytoplankton growth and diazotrophy. *Mar Ecol Prog Ser* 2013;489:1–16.
- [100] Resendis-Antonio O, Hernández M, Salazar E, Contreras S, Batallar G, Mora Y, et al. Systems biology of bacterial nitrogen fixation: high-throughput technology and its integrative description with constraint-based modeling. *BMC Syst Biol* 2011;5:120.
- [101] Le Lin B, Sakoda A, Shibasaki R, Goto N, Suzuki M. Modelling a global biogeochemical nitrogen cycle in terrestrial ecosystems. *Ecol Modell* 2000;135:89–110.
- [102] Wang YP, Houlton BZ, Field CB. A model of biogeochemical cycles of carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorus including symbiotic nitrogen fixation and phosphatase production. *Global Biogeochem Cycles* 2007;21:1–15.
- [103] Menge DNL, Hedin LO, Pacala SW. Nitrogen and phosphorus limitation over long-term ecosystem development in terrestrial ecosystems. *PLoS ONE* 2012;7.
- [104] Stukel MR, Coles VJ, Brooks MT, Hood RR. Top-down, bottom-up and physical controls on diatom-diazotroph assemblage growth in the Amazon River plume. *Biogeosciences* 2014;11:3259–78.
- [105] Fernández-Castro B, Pahlow M, Mouriño-Carballido B, Maraño E, Oschlies A. Optimality-based *Trichodesmium* diazotrophy in the North Atlantic subtropical gyre. *J Plankton Res* 2016;38:946–63.
- [106] Monteiro FM, Follows MJ, Dutkiewicz S. Distribution of diverse nitrogen fixers in the global ocean. *Global Biogeochem Cycles* 2010;24:GB3017.
- [107] Weber T, Deutsch C. Local versus basin-scale limitation of marine nitrogen fixation. *PNAS* 2014;111:8741–6.
- [108] Follett CL, Dutkiewicz S, Karl DM, Inomura K, Follows MJ. Seasonal resource conditions favor a summertime increase in North Pacific diatom-diazotroph associations. *ISME J* 2018;12:1543–57.
- [109] Karl DM, Church MJ. Microbial oceanography and the Hawaii Ocean Time-series programme. *Nat Rev Microbiol* 2014;12:699–713.
- [110] Barton AD, Pershing AJ, Litchman E, Record NR, Edwards KF, Finkel Z V, et al. (2013) The biogeography of marine plankton traits. *Ecol Lett.* 16: 522–34
- [111] Weber TS, Deutsch C. Oceanic nitrogen reservoir regulated by plankton diversity and ocean circulation. *Nature* 2012;489:419–22.
- [112] Tagliabue A, Aumont O, DeAth R, Dunne JP, Dutkiewicz S, Galbraith E, et al. How well do global ocean biogeochemistry models simulate dissolved iron distributions? *Global Biogeochem Cycles* 2016;30:149–74.
- [113] Moore JK, Doney SC, Kleypas JA, Glover DM, Fung IY. An intermediate complexity marine ecosystem model for the global domain. *Deep Sea Res II* 2002;49:403–62.
- [114] Moore JK, Doney SC, Lindsay K. Upper ocean ecosystem dynamics and iron cycling in a global three-dimensional model. *Global Biogeochem Cycles* 2004;18:1–21.
- [115] Le Quéré C, Harrison SP, Prentice IC, Buitenhuis ET, Aumont O, Bopp L, et al. Ecosystem dynamics based on plankton functional types for global ocean biogeochemistry models. *Glob Chang Biol* 2005;11:2016–40.
- [116] Moore JK, Lindsay K, Doney SC, Long MC, Misumi K. Marine ecosystem dynamics and biogeochemical cycling in the community earth system model [CESM1(BGC)]: comparison of the 1990s with the 2090s under the RCP4.5 and RCP8.5 scenarios. *J Clim* 2013;26:9291–312.
- [117] Lauffkotter C, Vogt M, Gruber N, Aita-Noguchi M, Aumont O, Bopp L, et al. Drivers and uncertainties of future global marine primary production in marine ecosystem models. *Biogeosciences* 2015;12:6955–84.
- [118] Monod J. The growth of bacterial cultures. *Ann Rev Mar Sci* 1949;3:371–94.
- [119] Landolfi A, Dietze H, Koeve W, Oschlies A. Overlooked runaway feedback in the marine nitrogen cycle: the vicious cycle. *Biogeosciences* 2013;10:1351–63.
- [120] Moreno AR, Martiny AC. Ecological stoichiometry of ocean plankton. *Ann Rev Mar Sci* 2018;10:43–69.
- [121] Inomura K, Omta AW, Talmy D, Bragg J, Deutsch C, Follows MJ. A Mechanistic model of macromolecular allocation, elemental stoichiometry, and growth rate in phytoplankton. *Front Microbiol* 2020;11:1–22.
- [122] Omta AW, Talmy D, Inomura K, Irwin AJ, Finkel ZV, Sher D, et al. Quantifying nutrient throughput and DOM production by algae in continuous culture. *J Theor Biol* 2020;494:110214.
- [123] Liefer JD, Garg A, Fyfe MH, Irwin AJ, Benner I, Brown CM, et al. The macromolecular basis of phytoplankton C:N: P under nitrogen starvation. *Front Microbiol* 2019;10:763.
- [124] Dutkiewicz S, Cermeno P, Jahn O, Follows MJ, Hickman AA, Taniguchi DAA, et al. Dimensions of marine phytoplankton diversity. *Biogeosciences* 2020;17:609–34.
- [125] Landolfi A, Koeve W, Dietze H, Kähler P, Oschlies A. A new perspective on environmental controls of marine nitrogen fixation. *Geophys Res Lett* 2015;42:4482–9.
- [126] Tilman D. Resource competition and community structure. Princeton, NJ, USA: Princeton University Press; 1982.
- [127] Menge DNL, Levin SA, Hedin LO. Evolutionary tradeoffs can select against nitrogen fixation and thereby maintain nitrogen limitation. *PNAS* 2008;105:1573–8.
- [128] Menge DNL, Levin SA, Hedin LO. Facultative versus obligate nitrogen fixation strategies and their ecosystem consequences. *Am Nat* 2009;174:465–77.
- [129] Houlton BZ, Wang YP, Vitousek PM, Field CB. A unifying framework for dinitrogen fixation in the terrestrial biosphere. *Nature* 2008;454:327–30.
- [130] Le Lin B, Sakoda A, Shibasaki R, Suzuki M. A modelling approach to global nitrate leaching caused by anthropogenic fertilisation. *Water Res* 2001;35:1961–8.
- [131] Thornton PE, Lamarque JF, Rosenbloom NA, Mahowald NM. Influence of carbon-nitrogen cycle coupling on land model response to CO₂ fertilization and climate variability. *Global Biogeochem Cycles* 2007;21:GB4018.

- [132] Oleson KW, Lawrence DM, Bonan GB, Drewniak B, Huang M, Koven CD, et al. Technical description of version 4.5 of the Community Land Model (CLM). NCAR Tech 2013.
- [133] Wieder WR, Cleveland CC, Lawrence DM, Bonan GB. Effects of model structural uncertainty on carbon cycle projections: biological nitrogen fixation as a case study. *Environ Res Lett* 2015;10:44016.
- [134] Vitousek PM, Field CB. Ecosystem constraints to symbiotic nitrogen fixers: a simple model and its implications. *Biogeochemistry* 1999;46:179–202.
- [135] Orth JD, Thiele I, Palsson BØ. What is flux balance analysis? *Nat Biotechnol* 2010;28:245–8.
- [136] Schuster S, Fell D. Modeling and simulating metabolic networks. In: Lengauer T, editor. *Bioinformatics: From Genomes to Therapies*. Weinheim: Wiley-VCH; 2007. p. 755–805.
- [137] Resendis-Antonio O, Reed JL, Encarnación S, Collado-Vides J, Palsson B. Metabolic reconstruction and modeling of nitrogen fixation in *Rhizobium etli*. *PLOS Comput Biol* 2007;3:1887–95.
- [138] Campos TD, Zuñiga C, Passi A, Toro JD, Tibocha-Bonilla JD, Zepeda A, et al. Modeling of nitrogen fixation and polymer production in the heterotrophic diazotroph *Azotobacter vinelandii* DJ. *Metab Eng Commun* 2020;11:e00132.
- [139] Schuster S, Fell DA, Pfeiffer T. Is maximization of molar yield in metabolic networks favoured by evolution? *J Theor Biol* 2008;252:497–504.
- [140] Singh D, Carlson R, Fell D, Poolman M. Modelling metabolism of the diatom *Phaeodactylum tricornutum*. *Biochem Soc Trans* 2015;43:1182–6.
- [141] Oberhardt MA, Palsson B, Papin JA. Applications of genome-scale metabolic reconstructions. *Mol Syst Biol* 2009;5:1–15.
- [142] Feist AM, Palsson B. The growing scope of applications of genome-scale metabolic reconstructions using *Escherichia coli*. *Nat Biotechnol* 2008;26:659–67.
- [143] Raman K, Chandra N. Flux balance analysis of biological systems: applications and challenges. *Brief Bioinform* 2009;10:435–49.
- [144] Felcmanová K, Lukeš M, Kotabová E, Lawrence E, Halsey KH, Prášil O (2017) Carbon use efficiencies and allocation strategies in *Prochlorococcus marinus* strain PCC 9511 during nitrogen-limited growth. *Photosynth Res*. 134: 71–82.
- [145] Zavřel T, Faizi M, Loureiro C, Poschmann G, Stühler K, Sinetova M, et al. Quantitative insights into the cyanobacterial cell economy. *Elife* 2019;8:e42508.
- [146] Jahn M, Vialas V, Karlsen J, Maddalo G, Edfors F, Forsström B, et al. Growth of cyanobacteria is constrained by the abundance of light and carbon assimilation proteins. *Cell Rep* 2018;25:478–86.
- [147] Gomez JA, Höffner K, Barton PL. DFBAlab: a fast and reliable MATLAB code for dynamic flux balance analysis. *BMC Bioinf* 2014;15:1–10.
- [148] Gomez JA, Barton PL. Dynamic flux balance analysis using DFBAlab. In: *Metabolic Network Reconstruction and Modeling*; Humana Press: New York, NY: USA; 2018. p. 353–70.
- [149] Gardner JJ, Boyle NR. The use of genome-scale metabolic network reconstruction to predict fluxes and equilibrium composition of N-fixing versus C-fixing cells in a diazotrophic cyanobacterium, *Trichodesmium erythraeum*. *BMC Syst Biol* 2017;11:4.
- [150] Follows MJ, Dutkiewicz S. Modeling diverse communities of marine microbes. *Ann Rev Mar Sci* 2011;3:427–51.
- [151] Shuter B. A model of physiological adaptation in unicellular algae. *J Theor Biol* 1979;78:519–52.
- [152] Hellweger FL, Fredrick ND, McCarthy MJ, Gardner WS, Wilhelm SW, Paerl HW. Dynamic, mechanistic, molecular-level modelling of cyanobacteria: anabaena and nitrogen interaction. *Environ Microbiol* 2016;18:2721–31.
- [153] Nicholson DP, Stanley RHR, Doney SC. A phytoplankton model for the allocation of gross photosynthetic energy including the trade-offs of diazotrophy. *J Geophys Res Biogeosciences* 2018;123:1796–816.
- [154] Faizi M, Steuer R. Optimal proteome allocation strategies for phototrophic growth in a light-limited chemostat. *Microb Cell Fact* 2019;18:165.
- [155] Rittmann BE, McCarty PL. *Environmental biotechnology: principles and applications*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill; 2001.
- [156] Inomura K, Masuda T, Gauglitz JM. Active nitrogen fixation by *Crocospaera* expands their niche despite the presence of ammonium – A case study. *Sci Rep* 2019;9:15064.
- [157] Bull AT. The renaissance of continuous culture in the post-genomics age. *J Ind Microbiol Biotechnol* 2010;37:993–1021.
- [158] Healey FP. Interacting effects of light and nutrient limitation on the growth rate of *Synechococcus linearis* (Cyanophyceae). *J Phycol* 1985;21:134–46.
- [159] Henley WJ. The past, present and future of algal continuous cultures in basic research and commercial applications. *Algal Res* 2019;43:101636.
- [160] Nagai S, Aiba S. Reassessment of maintenance and energy uncoupling in the growth of *Azotobacter vinelandii*. *J Gen Microbiol* 1972;73:531–8.
- [161] Kuhla J, Oelze J. Dependency of growth yield, maintenance and K_s-values on the dissolved oxygen concentration in continuous cultures of *Azotobacter vinelandii*. *Arch Microbiol* 1988;149:509–14.
- [162] Bühler T, Sann R, Monter U, Dingier C, Kuhla J, Oelze J. Control of dinitrogen fixation in ammonium-assimilating cultures of *Azotobacter vinelandii*. *Arch Microbiol* 1987;148:247–51.
- [163] Bühler T, Monter U, Sann R, Kuhla J, Dingier C, Oelze J. Control of respiration and growth yield in ammonium-assimilating cultures of *Azotobacter vinelandii*. *Arch Microbiol* 1987;148:242–6.
- [164] García A, Ferrer P, Albiol J, Castillo T, Segura D, Peña C. Metabolic flux analysis and the NAD(P)H/NAD(P)⁺ ratios in chemostat cultures of *Azotobacter vinelandii*. *Microb Cell Fact* 2018;17:10.
- [165] Sessitsch A, Howieson JG, Perret X, Antoun H, Martínez-Romero E. Advances in *Rhizobium* research. *CRC Crit Rev Plant Sci* 2002;21:323–78.
- [166] González V, Santamaría RI, Bustos P, Hernández-González I, Medrano-Soto A, Moreno-Hagelsieb G, et al. The partitioned *Rhizobium etli* genome: genetic and metabolic redundancy in seven interacting replicons. *PNAS* 2006;103:3834–9.
- [167] Kanehisa M, Goto S, Hattori M, Aoki-Kinoshita KF, Itoh M, Kawashima S, et al. From genomics to chemical genomics: new developments in KEGG. *Nucleic Acids Res* 2006;34:D354–7.
- [168] Rai AN. *Handbook of symbiotic cyanobacteria*. Boca Raton: CRC Press, FL, USA; 1990.
- [169] Kaplan D, Peters GA. Interaction of carbon metabolism in the *Azolla-Anabaena* symbiosis. *Symbiosis* 1988;6:53–68.
- [170] Peters GA, Meeks JC. The *Azolla-Anabaena* symbiosis: basic biology. *Annu Rev Plant Physiol Mol Biol* 1989;40:193–210.
- [171] Fay P, Walsby AE. Metabolic activities of isolated heterocysts of the blue-green alga *Anabaena cylindrica*. *Nature* 1966;209:94–5.
- [172] Wilcox M, Mitchison GJ, Smith RJ. Pattern formation in the blue-green alga, *Anabaena* I Basic mechanisms. *J Cell Sci* 1973;12:707–23.
- [173] Walsby AE. The permeability of heterocysts to the gases nitrogen and oxygen. *Proc R Soc London Ser B, Biol Sci* 1985;226:345–66.
- [174] Paerl Hans W. Role of heterotrophic bacteria in promoting N₂ fixation by anabaena in aquatic habitats. *Microb Ecol* 1978;4:215–31.
- [175] Wolck CP, Ernst A, Elhai J. Heterocyst metabolism and development. In: Bryant DA, editor. *The Molecular Biology of Cyanobacteria*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic; 1994.
- [176] Adams DG. Heterocyst formation in cyanobacteria. *Curr Opin Microbiol* 2000;3:618–24.
- [177] Nürnberg DJ, Mariscal V, Bornikoe J, Nieves-Moriñó N, Krauß N, Herrero A, et al. Inter-cellular diffusion of a fluorescent sucrose analog via the septal junctions in a filamentous cyanobacterium. *mBio* 2015;6. e02109-14.
- [178] Hellweger FL, Kravchuk ES, Novotny V, Gladyshev MI. Agent-based modeling of the complex life cycle of a cyanobacterium (*Anabaena*) in a shallow reservoir. *Limnol Oceanogr* 2008;53:1227–41.
- [179] Hellweger FL. Resonating circadian clocks enhance fitness in cyanobacteria in silico. *Ecol Modell* 2010;221:1620–9.
- [180] Pinzon NM, Ju LK. Modeling culture profiles of the heterocystous N₂-fixing cyanobacterium *Anabaena flos-aquae*. *Biotechnol Prog* 2006;22:1532–40.
- [181] Allard JF, Hill AL, Rutenberg AD. Heterocyst patterns without patterning proteins in cyanobacterial filaments. *Dev Biol* 2007;312:427–34.
- [182] Zhu M, Callahan SM, Allen JS. Maintenance of heterocyst patterning in a filamentous cyanobacterium. *J Biol Dyn* 2010;4:621–33.
- [183] Brown AI, Rutenberg AD. A storage-based model of heterocyst commitment and patterning in cyanobacteria. *Phys Biol* 2014;11.
- [184] Torres-Sánchez A, Gómez-Gardeñes J, Faló F. An integrative approach for modeling and simulation of heterocyst pattern formation in cyanobacteria filaments. *PLOS Comput Biol* 2015;11:1–18.
- [185] Ishihara J, Tachikawa M, Iwasaki H, Mochizuki A. Mathematical study of pattern formation accompanied by heterocyst differentiation in multicellular cyanobacterium. *J Theor Biol* 2015;371:9–23.
- [186] Muñoz-garcía J, Ares S. Formation and maintenance of nitrogen-fixing cell patterns in filamentous cyanobacteria. *PNAS* 2016;113:6218–23.
- [187] Bormans M, Condie SA. Modelling the distribution of *Anabaena* and *Melosira* in a stratified river weir pool. *Hydrobiologia* 1997;364:3–13.
- [188] Malatinszky D, Steuer R, Jones PR. A comprehensively curated genome-scale two-cell model for the heterocystous cyanobacterium *Anabaena* sp. PCC 7120. *Plant Physiol* 2017;173:509–23.
- [189] Rabouille S, Staal M, Stal LJ, Soetaert K. Modeling the dynamic regulation of nitrogen fixation in the cyanobacterium *Trichodesmium* sp. *Appl Environ Microbiol* 2006;72:3217–27.
- [190] Inomura K, Follett CL, Masuda T, Eichner M, Prášil O, Deutsch C. Carbon transfer from the host diatom enables fast growth and high rate of N₂ fixation by symbiotic heterocystous cyanobacteria. *Plants* 2020;9:192.
- [191] Masuda T, Inomura K, Takahata N, Shiozaki T, Sano Y, Deutsch C, et al. Heterogeneous nitrogen fixation rates confer energetic advantage and expanded ecological niche of unicellular diazotroph populations. *Commun Biol* 2020;3:172.
- [192] Mulholland MR, Bernhardt PW. The effect of growth rate, phosphorus concentration, and temperature on N₂ fixation, carbon fixation, and nitrogen release in continuous cultures of *Trichodesmium* IMS101. *Limnol Oceanogr* 2005;50:839–49.
- [193] Coles VJ, Hood RR, Pascual M, Capone DG. Modeling the impact of *Trichodesmium* and nitrogen fixation in the Atlantic ocean. *J Geophys Res C Ocean* 2004;109:C06007.
- [194] Dutheil C, Aumont O, Gorguès T, Lorrain A, Bonnet S, Rodier M, et al. Modelling N₂ fixation related to *Trichodesmium* sp.: driving processes and impacts on primary production in the tropical Pacific Ocean. *Biogeosciences* 2018;15:4333–52.
- [195] Luo YW, Shi D, Kranz SA, Hopkinson BM, Hong H, Shen R, et al. Reduced nitrogenase efficiency dominates response of the globally important nitrogen fixer *Trichodesmium* to ocean acidification. *Nat Commun* 2019;10:1521.
- [196] Moisaner PH, Beinart RA, Hewson I, White AE, Johnson KS, Carlson CA, et al. Unicellular cyanobacterial distributions broaden the oceanic N₂ fixation domain. *Science* 2010;327:1512–4.
- [197] Vu TT, Stolyar SM, Pinchuk GE, Hill EA, Kucek LA, Brown RN, et al. Genome-scale modeling of light-driven reductant partitioning and carbon fluxes in

- diazotrophic unicellular cyanobacterium *Cyanothece* sp. ATCC 51142. *PLOS Comput Biol* 2012;8:e1002460.
- [198] Shi T, Ilikhyan I, Rabouille S, Zehr JP. Genome-wide analysis of diel gene expression in the unicellular N₂-fixing cyanobacterium *Crocospaera watsonii* WH 8501. *ISME J* 2010;4:621–32.
- [199] Mareš J, Johansen JR, Hauer T, Zima J, Ventura S, Cuzman O, et al. Taxonomic resolution of the genus *Cyanothece* (Chroococcales, Cyanobacteria), with a treatment on *Gloeothece* and three new genera, *Crocospaera*, *Rippkaea*, and *Zehria*. *J Phycol* 2019;55:578–610.
- [200] Hilton JA, Foster RA, James Tripp H, Carter BJ, Zehr JP, Villareal TA. Genomic deletions disrupt nitrogen metabolism pathways of a cyanobacterial diatom symbiont. *Nat Commun* 2013;4:1767.
- [201] Villareal TA. Marine nitrogen fixing diatom - cyanobacteria symbioses. In: Carpenter EJ, Capone DG, Rueter JG, editors. *Marine Pelagic Cyanobacteria: Trichodesmium and Other Diazotrophs*. The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers; 1992.
- [202] Schneegurt MA, Sherman DM, Nayar S, Sherman LA. Oscillating behavior of carbohydrate granule formation and dinitrogen fixation in the cyanobacterium *Cyanothece* sp. strain ATCC 51142. *J Bacteriol* 1994;176:1586–97.
- [203] Bale NJ, Hopmans EC, Zell C, Sobrinho RL, Kim JH, Sinninghe Damsté JS, et al. Long chain glycolipids with pentose head groups as biomarkers for marine endosymbiotic heterocystous cyanobacteria. *Org Geochem* 2015;81:1–7.
- [204] Bale NJ, Villareal TA, Hopmans EC, Brussaard CPD, Besseling M, Dorhout D, et al. C5 glycolipids of heterocystous cyanobacteria track symbiont abundance in the diatom *Hemiaulus hauckii* across the tropical North Atlantic. *Biogeosciences* 2018;15:1229–41.
- [205] Gómez F, Furuya K, Takeda S. Distribution of the cyanobacterium *Richelia intracellularis* as an epiphyte of the diatom *Chaetoceros compressus* in the western Pacific Ocean. *J Plankton Res* 2005;27:323–30.
- [206] Nicolaisen K, Hahn A, Schleiff E. The cell wall in heterocyst formation by *Anabaena* sp. PCC 7120. *J Basic Microbiol* 2009;49:5–24.
- [207] Foster RA, Kuypers MMM, Vagner T, Paerl RW, Musat N, Zehr JP. Nitrogen fixation and transfer in open ocean diatom-cyanobacterial symbioses. *ISME J* 2011;5:1484–93.
- [208] Venrick EL. The distribution and significance of *Richelia intracellularis* Schmidt in the North Pacific Central Gyre. *Limnol Oceanogr* 1974;19:437–45.
- [209] Mague T, Weare N, Holm-Hansen O. Nitrogen fixation in North Pacific Ocean. *Mar Biol* 1974;24:109–19.
- [210] Knapp AN. The sensitivity of marine N₂ fixation to dissolved inorganic nitrogen. *Front Microbiol* 2012;3:374.
- [211] Knapp AN, Dekaezemacker J, Bonnet S, Sohm JA, Capone DG. Sensitivity of *Trichodesmium erythraeum* and *Crocospaera watsonii* abundance and N₂ fixation rates to varying NO₃⁻ and PO₄³⁻ concentrations in batch cultures. *Aquat Microb Ecol* 2012;66:223–36.
- [212] Wang ZC, Burns A, Watt GD. Complex formation and O₂ sensitivity of *Azotobacter vinelandii* nitrogenase and its component proteins. *Biochemistry* 1985;24:214–21.
- [213] Holl CM, Montoya J. Interactions between nitrate uptake and nitrogen fixation in continuous cultures of the marine diazotroph *Trichodesmium* (cyanobacteria). *J Phycol* 2005;41:1178–83.
- [214] Redfield AC. The biological control of chemical factors in the environment. *Am Sci* 1958;46:205–21.
- [215] Masuda T, Furuya K, Kodama T, Takeda S, Harrison PJ. Ammonium uptake and dinitrogen fixation by the unicellular nanocyanobacterium *Crocospaera watsonii* in nitrogen-limited continuous cultures. *Limnol Oceanogr* 2013;58:2029–36.
- [216] Moore CM, Mills MM, Arrigo KR, Berman-Frank I, Bopp L, Boyd PW, et al. Processes and patterns of oceanic nutrient limitation. *Nat Geosci* 2013;6:701–10.
- [217] LaRoche J, Breitbarth E. Importance of the diazotrophs as a source of new nitrogen in the ocean. *J Sea Res* 2005;53:67–91.
- [218] Mague TH, Mague FC, Holm-Hansen O. Physiology and chemical composition of nitrogen-fixing phytoplankton in the central North Pacific Ocean. *Mar Biol* 1977;41:213–27.
- [219] Letelier RM, Karl DM. *Trichodesmium* spp. physiology and nutrient fluxes in the North Pacific subtropical gyre. *Aquat Microb Ecol* 1998;15:265–76.
- [220] Raven JA. The iron and molybdenum use efficiencies of plant growth with different energy, carbon and nitrogen sources. *New Phytol* 1988;109:279–87.
- [221] Ho T, Quigg A, Zoe V, Milligan AJ, Falkowski PG, Morel FMM. The elemental composition of some marine phytoplankton. *J Phycol* 2003;39:1145–59.
- [222] Jacq V, Ridame C, L'Helguen S, Kaczmar F, Saliot A. Response of the unicellular diazotrophic cyanobacterium *Crocospaera watsonii* to iron limitation. *PLoS ONE* 2014;9:e86749.
- [223] Cornejo-Castillo FM, Zehr JP. Hopanoid lipids may facilitate aerobic nitrogen fixation in the ocean. *PNAS* 2019;116:18269–71.
- [224] Loescher CR, Großkopf T, Desai FD, Gill D, Schunck H, Croot PL, et al. Facets of diazotrophy in the oxygen minimum zone waters off Peru. *ISME J* 2014;8:2180–92.
- [225] Mills MM, Turk-Kubo KA, van Dijken GL, Henke BA, Harding K, Wilson ST, et al. Unusual marine cyanobacteria/haptophyte symbiosis relies on N₂ fixation even in N-rich environments. *ISME J* 2020.
- [226] Meyer J, Löscher CR, Neuling SC, Reichel AF, Loginova A, Borchard C, et al. Changing nutrient stoichiometry affects phytoplankton production, DOP accumulation and dinitrogen fixation – A mesocosm experiment in the eastern tropical North Atlantic. *Biogeosciences* 2016;13:781–94.
- [227] Dixon R, Kahn D. Genetic regulation of biological nitrogen fixation. *Nat Rev Microbiol* 2004;2:621–31.
- [228] Farnelid H, Turk-Kubo K, Del Carmen Muñoz-Marín M, Zehr JP. New insights into the ecology of the globally significant uncultured nitrogen-fixing symbiont UCVN-A. *Aquat Microb Ecol* 2016;77:128–38.
- [229] Foster RA, Zehr JP. Diversity, genomics, and distribution of phytoplankton-cyanobacterium single-cell symbiotic associations. *Annu Rev Microbiol* 2019;73:435–56.
- [230] Küpper H, Ferimazova N, Šetlík I, Berman-Frank I. Traffic lights in *Trichodesmium*. Regulation of photosynthesis for nitrogen fixation studied by chlorophyll fluorescence kinetic microscopy. *Plant Physiol* 2004;135:2120–33.
- [231] Paerl HW, Bebout BM. Direct measurement of O₂-depleted microzones in marine *Oscillatoria*: relation to N₂ fixation. *Science* 1988;241:442–5.
- [232] Eichner MJ, Klawonn I, Wilson ST, Littmann S, Whitehouse MJ, Church MJ, et al. Chemical microenvironments and single-cell carbon and nitrogen uptake in field-collected colonies of *Trichodesmium* under different pCO₂. *ISME J* 2017;11:1305–17.
- [233] Eichner M, Basu S, Wang S, de Beer D, Shaked Y. Mineral iron dissolution in *Trichodesmium* colonies: the role of O₂ and pH microenvironments. *Limnol Oceanogr* 2020;65:1149–60.
- [234] Peters GA, Mayne BC. The *Azolla*, *Anabaena azollae* Relationship. *Plant Physiol* 1974;53:820–4.
- [235] Zehr JP. How single cells work together. *Science* 2015;349:2015–7.
- [236] He C, Fong LG, Young SG, Jiang H. NanoSIMS imaging: an approach for visualizing and quantifying lipids in cells and tissues. *J Investig Med* 2017;65:669–72.
- [237] Hagino K, Onuma R, Kawachi M, Horiguchi T (2013) Discovery of an endosymbiotic nitrogen-fixing cyanobacterium UCVN-A in *Braarudosphaera bigelowii* (Prymnesiophyceae). *PLoS ONE*. 8: e81749.
- [238] Thompson AW, Foster RA, Krupke A, Carter BJ, Musat N, Vulot D, et al. Unicellular cyanobacterium symbiotic with a single-celled eukaryotic alga. *Science* 2019;337:1546–50.
- [239] Shiozaki T, Fujiwara A, Ijichi M, Harada N, Nishino S, Nishi S, et al. Diazotroph community structure and the role of nitrogen fixation in the nitrogen cycle in the Chukchi Sea (western Arctic Ocean). *Limnol Oceanogr* 2018;63:2191–205.
- [240] Harding K, Turk-Kubo KA, Sipler RE, Mills MM, Bronk DA, Zehr JP. Symbiotic unicellular cyanobacteria fix nitrogen in the Arctic Ocean. *PNAS* 2018;115:13371–5.
- [241] Montoya JP, Holl CM, Zehr JP, Hansen A, Villareal TA, Capone DG. High rates of N₂ fixation by unicellular diazotrophs in the oligotrophic Pacific Ocean. *Nature* 2004;430:1027–31.
- [242] Tripp HJ, Bench SR, Turk KA, Foster RA, Desany BA, Niazi F, et al. Metabolic streamlining in an open-ocean nitrogen-fixing cyanobacterium. *Nature* 2010;464:90–4.
- [243] Riemann L, Farnelid H, Steward GF. Nitrogenase genes in non-cyanobacterial plankton: prevalence, diversity and regulation in marine waters. *Aquat Microb Ecol* 2010;61:235–47.
- [244] Farnelid H, Andersson AF, Bertilsson S, Al-soud WA, Hansen LH. Nitrogenase gene amplicons from global marine surface waters are dominated by genes of non-cyanobacteria. *PLoS ONE* 2011;6:e19223.
- [245] Farnelid H, Bentzon-Tilia M, Andersson AF, Bertilsson S, Jost G, Labrenz M, et al. Active nitrogen-fixing heterotrophic bacteria at and below the chemocline of the central Baltic Sea. *ISME J* 2013;7:1413–23.
- [246] Nakayama T, Kamikawa R, Tanifuji G, Kashiyama Y, Ohkouchi N, Archibald JM, et al. Complete genome of a nonphotosynthetic cyanobacterium in a diatom reveals recent adaptations to an intracellular lifestyle. *PNAS* 2014;111:11407–12.
- [247] Kumar PK, Singh A, Ramesh R, Nallathambi T. N₂ fixation in the Eastern Arabian Sea: probable role of heterotrophic diazotrophs. *Front Mar Sci* 2017;4:1–10.
- [248] Farnelid H, Turk-Kubo K, Ploug H, Ossolinski JE, Collins JR, Van Mooy BAS, et al. Diverse diazotrophs are present on sinking particles in the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre. *ISME J* 2019;13:170–82.
- [249] Paerl HW, Profert LE. Oxygen-poor microzones as potential sites of microbial N₂ fixation in nitrogen-depleted aerobic marine waters. *Appl Environ Microbiol* 1987;53:1078–87.
- [250] Garcia HE, Locarnini RA, Boyer TP, Antonov JI, Baranova OK, Zweng MM, et al. (2013) *World Ocean Atlas 2013, Volume 3: Dissolved Oxygen, Apparent Oxygen Utilization, and Oxygen Saturation*. S. Levitus, ed.; A. Mishonov, Technical Ed. NOAA Atlas NESDIS. 3: 27.
- [251] Bianchi D, Weber TS, Kiko R, Deutsch C. Global niche of marine anaerobic metabolisms expanded by particle microenvironments. *Nat Geosci* 2018;11:1–6.
- [252] Bebout BM, Paerl HW, Crocker KM, Profert LE. Diel interactions of oxygenic photosynthesis and N₂ fixation (acetylene reduction) in a marine microbial mat community. *Appl Environ Microbiol* 1987;53:2353–62.
- [253] Paerl HW. Physiological ecology and regulation of N₂ fixation in natural waters. *Adv Microb Ecol* 1990;11:305–44.
- [254] Herbert RA. Heterotrophic nitrogen fixation in shallow estuarine sediments. *J Exp Mar Bio Ecol* 1975;18:215–25.
- [255] Daesch G, Mortenson LE. Effect of ammonia on the synthesis and function of the N₂-fixing enzyme system in *Clostridium pasteurianum*. *J Bacteriol* 1972;110:103–9.

- [256] Brooks RH, Brexonik PL, Putnam HD, Keirn MA. Nitrogen fixation in an estuarine environment: the Waccasassa on the Florida gulf coast. *Limnol Oceanogr* 1971;16:701–10.
- [257] Kitano H. Systems biology: a brief overview. *Science* 2002;295:1662–4.
- [258] Kitano H. Computational systems biology. *Nature* 2002;420:206–10.
- [259] Finzi-hart JA, Pett-Ridge J, Weber PK, Popa R, Fallon SJ, Gunderson T, et al. Fixation and fate of C and N in the cyanobacterium *Trichodesmium* using nanometer-scale secondary ion mass spectrometry. *PNAS* 2009;106:6345–50.
- [260] Foster RA, Szejtjenszus S, Kuypers MMM. Measuring carbon and N₂ fixation in field populations of colonial and free-living unicellular cyanobacteria using nanometer-scale secondary ion mass spectrometry. *J Phycol* 2013;49:502–16.
- [261] Williams RG, Follows MJ. Ocean dynamics and the carbon cycle. Cambridge University Press; 2011.
- [262] Holl CM, Montoya JP. Diazotrophic growth of the marine cyanobacterium *Trichodesmium* IMS101 in continuous culture: effects of growth rate on N₂-fixation rate, biomass, and C:N: P stoichiometry. *J Phycol* 2008;44:929–37.
- [263] Dron A, Rabouille S, Claquin P, Chang P, Raimbault V, Talec A, et al. Light:dark (12:12 h) quantification of carbohydrate fluxes in *Crocospaera watsonii*. *Aquat Microb Ecol* 2012;68:43–55.
- [264] Rhee G-Y, Lederman TC. Effects of nitrogen sources on P-limited growth of *Anabaena flos-aquae*. *J Phycol* 1983;185:179–85.
- [265] Rowell BYP, Enticott S, Stewart WDP. Glutamine synthetase and nitrogenase activity in the blue-green alga *Anabaena cylindrica*. *New Phytol* 1977;79:41–54.
- [266] Plunkett MH, Knutson CM, Barney BM. Key factors affecting ammonium production by an *Azotobacter vinelandii* strain deregulated for biological nitrogen fixation. *Microb Cell Fact* 2020;19:1–12.
- [267] Luxem KE, Kraepiel AML, Zhang L, Waldbauer JR, Zhang X. Carbon substrate re-orders relative growth of a bacterium using Mo-, V-, or Fe-nitrogenase for nitrogen fixation. *Environ Microbiol* 2020;22:1397–408.
- [268] Gomez JA, Höffner K, Barton PI. Mathematical modeling of a raceway pond system for biofuels production. *Comput Aided Chem Eng* 2016;38:2355–60.
- [269] Sunagawa S, Coelho LP, Chaffron S, Kultima JR, Labadie K, Salazar G, et al. Structure and function of the global ocean microbiome. *Science* 2015;348:1–10.
- [270] Saito MA, Bertrand EM, Duffy ME, Gaylord DA, Held NA, Hervey WJ, et al. Progress and challenges in ocean metaproteomics and proposed best practices for data sharing. *J Proteome Res* 2019;18:1461–76.
- [271] Gilbert JA, Field D, Huang Y, Edwards R, Li W, Gilna P, et al. Detection of large numbers of novel sequences in the metatranscriptomes of complex marine microbial communities. *PLoS ONE* 2008;3.
- [272] Daniel R. The metagenomics of soil. *Nat Rev Microbiol* 2005;3:470–8.
- [273] Keiblinger KM, Wilhartz IC, Schneider T, Roschitzki B, Schmid E, Eberl L, et al. Soil metaproteomics – Comparative evaluation of protein extraction protocols. *Soil Biol Biochem* 2012;54:14–24.
- [274] Carvalhais LC, Dennis PG, Tyson GW, Schenk PM. Application of metatranscriptomics to soil environments. *J Microbiol Methods* 2012;91:246–51.
- [275] Horgan RP, Kenny LC. 'Omic' technologies: genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics and metabolomics. *Obstet Gynaecol* 2011;13:189–95.
- [276] Wilson ST, Aylward FO, Ribalet F, Barone B, Casey JR, Connell PE, et al. Coordinated regulation of growth, activity and transcription in natural populations of the unicellular nitrogen-fixing cyanobacterium *Crocospaera*. *Nat Microbiol* 2017;2.
- [277] Biegala IC, Raimbault P. High abundance of diazotrophic picocyanobacteria (<3 μm) in a Southwestern Pacific coral lagoon. *Aquat Microb Ecol* 2008;51:45–53.
- [278] Luo YW, Doney SC, Anderson LA, Benavides M, Berman-Frank I, Bode A, et al. Database of diazotrophs in global ocean: abundance, biomass and nitrogen fixation rates. *Earth Syst Sci Data* 2012;4:47–73.
- [279] Cassar N, Tang W, Gabathuler H, Huang K. Method for high frequency underway N₂ fixation measurements: flow-through incubation acetylene reduction assays by cavity ring down laser absorption Spectroscopy (FARACAS). *Anal Chem* 2018;90:2839–51.
- [280] Kempes CP, Wang L, Amend JP, Doyle J, Hoehler T. Evolutionary tradeoffs in cellular composition across diverse bacteria. *ISME J* 2016;10:2145–57.
- [281] Menden-deuer S, Lessard EJ. Carbon to volume relationships for dinoflagellates, diatoms, and other protist plankton. *Limnol Oceanogr* 2000;45:569–79.
- [282] Strathmann RR. Estimating the organic carbon content of phytoplankton from cell volume or plasma volume. *Limnol Oceanogr* 1967;12:411–8.
- [283] Hutchins DA, Fu FX, Zhang Y, Warner ME, Feng Y, Portune K, et al. CO₂ control of *Trichodesmium* N₂ fixation, photosynthesis, growth rates, and elemental ratios: implications for past, present, and future ocean biogeochemistry. *Limnol Oceanogr* 2007;52:1293–304.
- [284] Fernandez AC, Phillies GDJ. Temperature dependence of the diffusion coefficient of polystyrene latex spheres. *Biopolymers* 1983;22:593–5.
- [285] Broecker WS, Peng T-H. Gas exchange rates between air and sea. *Tellus* 1974;26:21–35.
- [286] Dechatiwongse P, Srisamai S, Maitland G, Hellgardt K. Effects of light and temperature on the photoautotrophic growth and photoinhibition of nitrogen-fixing cyanobacterium *Cyanothece* sp. ATCC 51142. *Algal Res* 2014;5:103–11.
- [287] Fu FX, Yu E, Garcia NS, Gale J, Luo Y, Webb EA, et al. Differing responses of marine N₂ fixers to warming and consequences for future diazotroph community structure. *Aquat Microb Ecol* 2014;72:33–46.
- [288] Michiels J, Verreth C, Vanderleyden J. Effects of temperature stress on bean-nodulating *Rhizobium* strains. *Appl Environ Microbiol* 1994;60:1206–12.
- [289] Kuhla J, Oelze J. Dependence of nitrogenase switch-off upon oxygen stress on the nitrogenase activity in *Azotobacter vinelandii*. *J Bacteriol* 1988;170:5325–9.
- [290] Pirt SJ. Maintenance Energy: a general model for energy-limited and energy-sufficient growth. *Arch Microbiol* 1982;133:300–2.
- [291] Elrifi IR, Turpin DH. Steady-state luxury consumption and the concept of optimum nutrient ratios: a study with phosphate and nitrate limited *Selenastrum minutum* (Chlorophyta). *J Phycol* 1985;21:592–602.
- [292] Rhee G-Y. Effects of N: P atomic ratios and nitrate limitation on algal growth, cell composition, and nitrate uptake. *Limnol Oceanogr* 1978;23:10–25.
- [293] Foster RA, Goebel NL, Zehr JP. Isolation of *Calothrix rhizosoleniae* (cyanobacteria) strain SC01 from *Chaetoceros* (bacillariophyta) spp. diatoms of the subtropical North Pacific Ocean. *J Phycol* 2010;46:1028–37.
- [294] Compaoré J, Stal LJ. Effect of temperature on the sensitivity of nitrogenase to oxygen in two heterocystous cyanobacteria. *J Phycol* 2010;3:1172–9.
- [295] Masuda T, Bernát G, Bečková M, Kotabová E, Lawrenz E, Lukeš M, et al. Diel regulation of photosynthetic activity in the oceanic unicellular diazotrophic cyanobacterium *Crocospaera watsonii* WH8501. *Environ Microbiol* 2018;20:546–60.
- [296] Sakshaug E, Andresen K, Mykkestad S, Olsen Y. Nutrient status of phytoplankton communities in Norwegian waters (marine, brackish, and fresh) as revealed by their chemical composition. *J Plankt Researc* 1983;5:175–96.
- [297] Laws EA, Bannister TT. Nutrient- and light-limited growth of *Thalassiosira fluviatilis* in continuous culture, with implications for phytoplankton growth in the ocean. *Limnol Oceanogr* 1980;25:457–73.
- [298] Dettmer Aronov PA, Hammock BD. Mass spectrometry-based metabolomics. *Mass Spectrom Rev* 2007;26:51–78.
- [299] Johnson CH, Ivanisevic J, Siuzdak G. Metabolomics: beyond biomarkers and towards mechanisms. *Nat Rev Mol Cell Biol* 2016;17:451–9.
- [300] Quigg A, Beardall J. Protein turnover in relation to maintenance metabolism at low photon flux in two marine microalgae. *Plant Cell Environ* 2003;26:693–703.
- [301] Gu H, Du J, Carnevale Neto F, Carroll PA, Turner SJ, Chiorean EG, et al. Metabolomics method to comprehensively analyze amino acids in different domains. *Analyst* 2015;140:2726–34.