Characterising organic matter in recirculating aquaculture systems with fluorescence EEM spectroscopy - DTU Orbit (31/01/2019)

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The potential of recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS) in the aquaculture industry is increasingly being acknowledged. Along with intensified application, the need to better characterise and understand the accumulated dissolved organic matter (DOM) within these systems increases. Mature RASs, stocked with rainbow trout and operated at steady state at four feed loadings, were analysed by dissolved organic carbon (DOC) analysis and fluorescence excitation-emission matrix (EEM) spectroscopy. The fluorescence dataset was then decomposed by PARAFAC analysis using the drEEM toolbox. This revealed that the fluorescence character of the RAS water could be represented by five components, of which four have previously been identified in fresh water, coastal marine water, wetlands and drinking water. The fluorescence components as well as the DOC showed positive correlations with feed loading, however there was considerable variation between the five fluorescence components with respect to the degree of accumulation with feed loading. The five components were found to originate from three sources: the feed; the influent tap water (groundwater); and processes related to the fish and the water treatment system. This paper details the first application of fluorescence EEM spectroscopy to assess DOM in RAS, and highlights the potential applications of this technique within future RAS management strategies.

General information
State: Published
Organisations: National Institute of Aquatic Resources, Section for Marine Ecology and Oceanography, Department of Environmental Engineering, Section for Aquaculture
Pages: 112-120
Publication date: 2015
Peer-reviewed: Yes

Publication information
Journal: Water Research
Volume: 83
ISSN (Print): 0043-1354
Ratings:
BFI (2019): BFI-level 2
Web of Science (2019): Indexed yes
BFI (2018): BFI-level 2
Web of Science (2018): Indexed yes
BFI (2017): BFI-level 2
Scopus rating (2017): CiteScore 7.55 SJR 2.601 SNIP 2.358
Web of Science (2017): Impact factor 7.051
Web of Science (2017): Indexed yes
BFI (2016): BFI-level 2
Scopus rating (2016): CiteScore 7.49 SJR 2.663 SNIP 2.563
Web of Science (2016): Impact factor 6.942
Web of Science (2016): Indexed yes
BFI (2015): BFI-level 2
Scopus rating (2015): CiteScore 6.63 SJR 2.665 SNIP 2.482
Web of Science (2015): Impact factor 5.991
Web of Science (2015): Indexed yes
BFI (2014): BFI-level 2
Scopus rating (2014): CiteScore 6.13 SJR 2.946 SNIP 2.702
Web of Science (2014): Impact factor 5.528
Web of Science (2014): Indexed yes
BFI (2013): BFI-level 2
Scopus rating (2013): CiteScore 6.02 SJR 2.956 SNIP 2.676
Web of Science (2013): Impact factor 5.323
ISI indexed (2013): ISI indexed yes
Web of Science (2013): Indexed yes
BFI (2012): BFI-level 2
Scopus rating (2012): CiteScore 5.15 SJR 2.914 SNIP 2.442
Web of Science (2012): Impact factor 4.655
ISI indexed (2012): ISI indexed yes
Web of Science (2012): Indexed yes
BFI (2011): BFI-level 2
Scopus rating (2011): CiteScore 5.43 SJR 2.862 SNIP 2.355
Web of Science (2011): Impact factor 4.865
ISI indexed (2011): ISI indexed yes
Web of Science (2011): Indexed yes
BFI (2010): BFI-level 2
Scopus rating (2010): SJR 2.592 SNIP 2.192
Web of Science (2010): Impact factor 4.546
Web of Science (2010): Indexed yes
BFI (2009): BFI-level 2
Scopus rating (2009): SJR 2.319 SNIP 2.224
Web of Science (2009): Indexed yes
BFI (2008): BFI-level 2
Scopus rating (2008): SJR 2.073 SNIP 2.178
Web of Science (2008): Indexed yes
Scopus rating (2007): SJR 1.94 SNIP 2.184
Web of Science (2007): Indexed yes
Scopus rating (2006): SJR 1.902 SNIP 2.233
Web of Science (2006): Indexed yes
Scopus rating (2005): SJR 2.113 SNIP 2.334
Web of Science (2005): Indexed yes
Scopus rating (2004): SJR 2.209 SNIP 2.108
Web of Science (2004): Indexed yes
Scopus rating (2003): SJR 1.702 SNIP 1.908
Web of Science (2003): Indexed yes
Scopus rating (2002): SJR 1.568 SNIP 1.757
Web of Science (2002): Indexed yes
Scopus rating (2001): SJR 1.319 SNIP 1.69
Web of Science (2001): Indexed yes
Scopus rating (2000): SJR 1.399 SNIP 1.662
Web of Science (2000): Indexed yes
Scopus rating (1999): SJR 1.432 SNIP 1.55
Original language: English
DOIs: 10.1016/j.watres.2015.06.037
Research output: Research - peer-review › Journal article – Annual report year: 2015