Human Footprint on the Seafloor – An Outlook from Underwater Mapping Observations

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Message from the Guest Editors

Unlike the Earth surface, which satellite observations have helped to map and learn about, the marine seafloor is still largely a mystery. However, the recent technological development of underwater acoustic and optical instruments and autonomous vehicles has opened new possibilities to explore the ocean seafloor. High-resolution mapping can identify and quantify the human footprint on the ocean seafloor over the centuries, providing new insights to evaluate the effects on marine habitats. In this Special Issue, we would like to collect the latest results related to high-resolution mapping of the seafloor and to the quantitative assessment of the presence of human traces on the seafloor with the aim to: a) define the state of the art in terms of technological developments for seafloor mapping and human footprint assessment; b) increase global knowledge about natural resources and human traces in the ocean seafloor over the centuries in shallow and deep waters; and c) estimate long-lasting consequences on sea-floor morphology and habitat properties.

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