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# Inorganic polyphosphate from microalgae: A DAPI-based estimation in microtiter plate V.5

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protocol .

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The DAPI-based fluorometric estimation of polyphosphate from microalgae has been widely used in field samples since the method was published by Martin P. et al., where fluorescence of DAPI-stained samples is analyzed in quartz cuvettes by spectrofluorometer. In order to minimize the photobleaching of DAPI and reduce the consumption of reagent, time and labor, we have now scaled this method to 96-well black microtiter plate. Regarding to the matrix effects in microplate, the calculation has been modified accordingly.

Our method permits processing nine samples by using only 250 uL of extracted sample, 500 uL of RNase, 500 uL of DNase, 1000 uL of proteinase and <2000 uL of DAPI (100 uM). A lid with black film can protect all DAPI-stained samples from photobleaching.

Martin, Patrick & Van Mooy, Benjamin. Fluorometric Quantification of Polyphosphate in Environmental Plankton Samples: Extraction Protocols, Matrix Effects, and Nucleic Acid Interference. Applied and Environmental Microbiology.

<http://doi.org/10.1128/AEM.02592-12>

Yingyu Hu, Zoe V Finkel 2022. Inorganic polyphosphate from microalgae: A DAPI-based estimation in microtiter plate . **protocols.io**  
<https://protocols.io/view/inorganic-polyphosphate-from-microalgae-a-dapi-bas-b63xrgpn>  
Yingyu Hu

Correct the typo



DAPI, polyphosphate, microtiter plate, microplate, microalgae, fluorescence

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1. Total particulate phosphorus (TPP) measurement is recommended prior to the extraction of polyphosphate. The level of TPP helps to estimate the volume of extraction solution.
2. Different species or different sample locations (for field samples) require different numbers of extraction. A preliminary extraction efficiency test helps to obtain optimized number of extraction for extracting the most amount of polyphosphate with the least number of extraction.
3. Extracted polyphosphate must be measured on the same day. Polyphosphate loss has been observed if the extraction is processed days after.
4. The polyphosphate standard aliquot can only be thawed and used once. Do not refrozen and thawed multiple times.

## Chemicals

☒ Tris Buffer 1M pH 7.0 **Fisher**

**Scientific Catalog #BP1756-500**

☒ Sodium phosphate glass type 45 **Sigma**

**Aldrich Catalog #S4379-500MG**

☒ Proteinase-K **Fisher**

**Scientific Catalog #BP1700-500**

☒ RNase A: 500 U/mL; RNase T1: 20000 U/mL **Fisher**

**Scientific Catalog #AM2288**

☒ TURBO DNase 2 U/uL **Fisher**

**Scientific Catalog #AM2239**

☒ DAPI: 4'6-Diamidino-2-phenylindole dihydrochloride **Fisher**

**Scientific Catalog #D1306**

Budget of enzyme for every nine samples

- RNase A (AM2288): half package
- DNase (AM2239): one package
- Proteinase-K: two tubes of aliquot (about 600 uL/tube)

## Sample collection

- 1 Filter microalgae in liquid media onto precombusted GFF filters, using gentle vacuum pressure (5 inches Hg).

Filter forceps

blunt end, stainless steel

Millipore      XX6200006P

- 2 Rinse sample with filtered seawater
- 3 Place sample filters in cryogenic vials

- 4 Filter blank media (without cells) through precombusted GFF filter as blank.
- 5 Flash freeze filters and stored at  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$
- 6 Freeze dry before measurement.

FreeZone® 2.5 L Benchtop Freeze Dryers  
Labconco® 700202000

#### Preparation of reagents

- 7 Tris buffer  $1\text{ M}$   $20\text{ mM}$   $\text{pH } 7.0$

Budget:  
About 400 mL per nine samples

- 7.1 In a 1 L volumetric flask, top  $20\text{ mL}$   $1\text{ M}$   $\text{pH } 7.0$  Tris buffer to 1 L with MilliQ
- 7.2 Filter through Rapid-flow and store at  $\text{Room temperature}$

If Tris buffer is to be used right away, this step is not necessary.

Sterile Disposable Filter Units with PES  
Membrane  
Thermo Scientific™ Nalgene™ Rapid- 5964  
Flow™ 520

## 8 PolyP primary standard stock

8.1 Weigh one glass pellet of polyP (45) and write down the weight.

Microbalance  
Cubis series  
Sartorius MSE6.6S-000-DM

8.2 Transfer the pellet into a 100 mL graduated cylinder.

8.3 Dilute to 100 mL with Tris [M]20 mM pH7.0

8.4 Aliquot primary stock into 10~50 uL per microtube with Stepper and store at  
-20 °C

## 9 PolyP secondary standard stock

If the pellet is far more than 10 mg, dilute primary to secondary to bring down the concentration before preparing working standard

## 10 Proteinase K [M]20 mg/ml

10.1 Add 25 mL MilliQ directly into the original package of Proteinase K, vortex to mix

10.2 Aliquot 600 uL to microtubes (around 45 microtubes) and keep frozen at

♿ -20 °C

11 DAPI primary stock [M]14.3 mM

Add 📄2 mL MilliQ directly into the original package and keep frozen at ♿ -20 °C

Preliminary extraction efficiency test

12 Prepare boiling bath.

VWR® Advanced Hot Plates

VWR 97042-658

Hollow Polypropylene (PP) Ball Bath  
Covers, 20 mm

Cole-Parmer UZ-06821-04

Tube rack


Simport MultiRack™ CA48648-606

13 Transfer sample into glass centrifuge tube.

Disposable Glass Screw-Cap Centrifuge  
Tubes

10 mL

Corning® 99502-10

14 If the sample has less than 3 ug total particulate phosphate, use  2 mL Tris Buffer [M]20 mM pH7.0 for each extraction.

Otherwise, use  4 mL Tris Buffer [M]20 mM pH7.0 for each extraction.

15 Add  2 mL or  4 mL Tris buffer [M]20 mM pH7.0 , vortex and then sonicate.

15s

Specific Pipette Tips 5mL

Thermo Scientific™ Finntip™ 21-377-304

16 Keep in boiling bath.

5m

17 Sonicate

15s

18 Vortex and then transfer extract to a 20 mL scintillation vial, label the vial with number of extraction.

Disposable Soda-Lime Glass Pasteur  
Pipets

5 3/4"

Fisherbrand 13-678-6A

VWR® Vials, Borosilicate Glass, with  
Phenolic Screw Cap


22.18 mL




VWR 66012-044



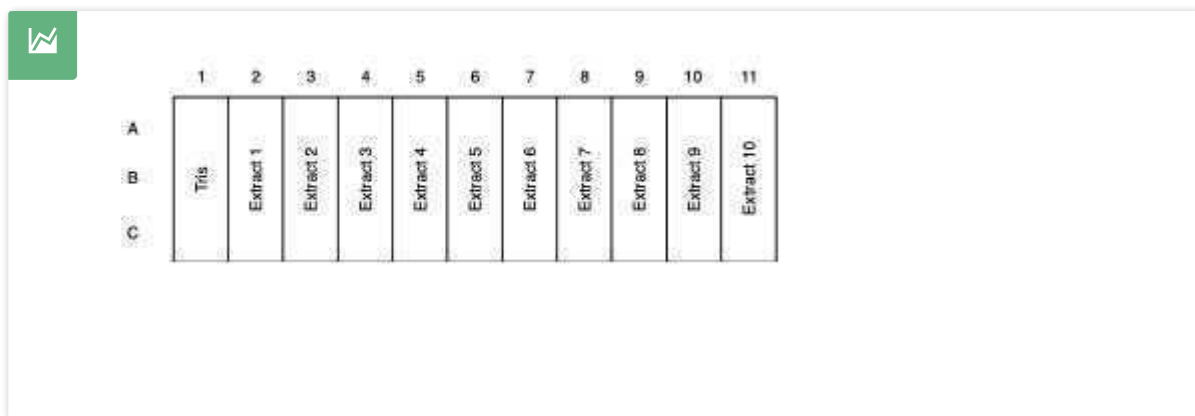
24-400 cap: VWR 89076-764

19  Repeat until total extract number reaches 10.

20 Transfer 2 mL of extract to a 2 mL microtube.  
 **13300 rpm, Room temperature, 00:05:00**




21 Load black microtitre plate with  **250 µL** extract (triplicate).  
Tris buffer  **20 mM**  **7.0** is used as blank.

96-Well Black Microplates  
Polystyrene  
Greiner Bio-One 655076



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
A	Tris	Extract 1	Extract 2	Extract 3	Extract 4	Extract 5	Extract 6	Extract 7	Extract 8	Extract 9	Extract 10
B											
C											

22 Prepare DAPI working solution  **100 uM**

Dilute  **2.1 µL** of  **14.3 mM** DAPI stock with  **300 µL** MilliQ in a foil wrapped microtube and vortex.

Volume of total 100 uM DAPI =  $30 \times (10 \times 3 \times N + 3)$ , where N is the number of culture samples tested.



- 23 In the dimmed room with only red light bulb on, by using either stepper or pipette, add **30  $\mu$ L** **100  $\mu$ M** DAPI to each sample in the plate.

Finntip™ Stepper Pipette Tips  
500  $\mu$ L  
Thermo Scientific™ 9404170

Finnpipette Stepper Pipette  
Thermo Scientific™ 4540000

- 24 Adhere black film on the top of a microplate lid and cover the plate with this lid.

Black Vinyl Films for Fluorescence and  
Photoprotection  
VWR 89087-692

- 25 Shake at room temperature





7m

- 26 Read fluorescence: excitation at 410 nm and emission at 550 nm

Varioskan LUX Multimode Microplate  
Reader  
Thermo Fisher VL0L00D0

- 27 Plot fluorescence intensity versus number of extraction.  
The number of extract (N) is the stationary point where the fluorescence of stained extract stops decreasing or the derivative of the fluorescence after that point is close to zero.

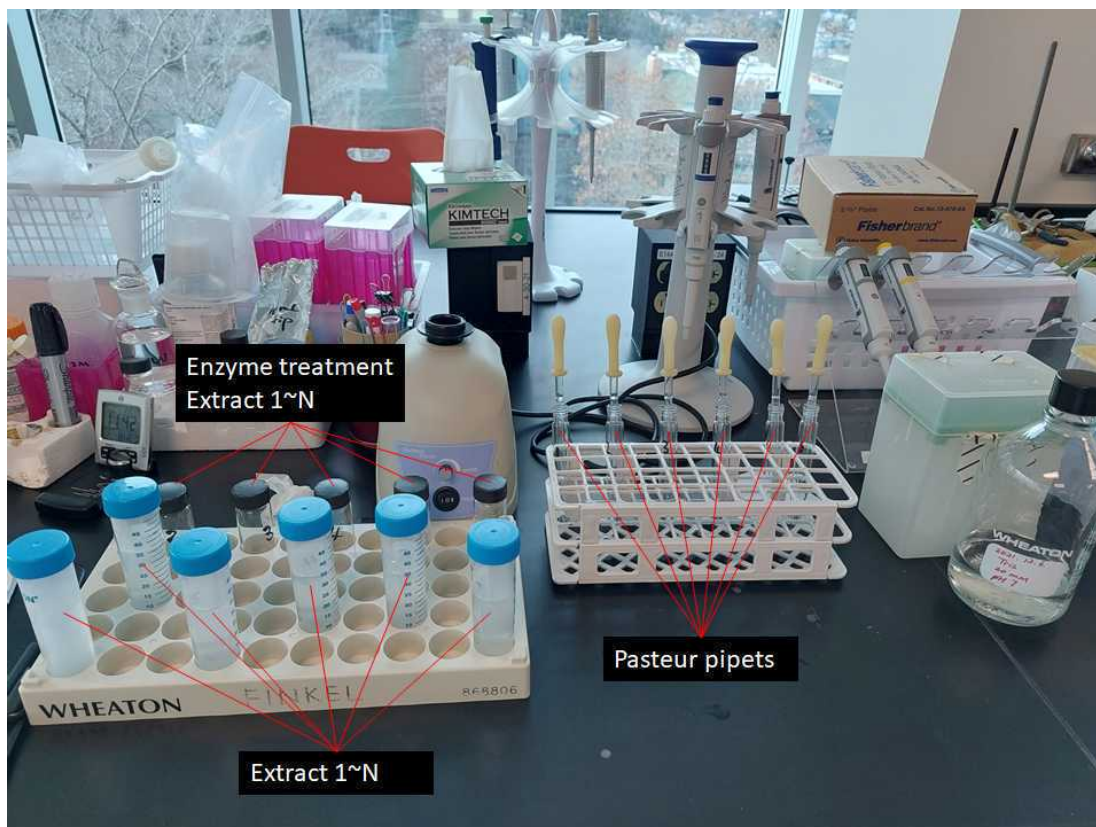
#### Extraction of polyphosphate from samples

- 28 Prepare boiling bath. 45m
- 29 Prepare  37 °C incubator.
- 30 Transfer samples into glass centrifuge tubes.
- 31 Add same amount of Tris buffer  20 mM  7.0 as preliminary test, vortex and then sonicate 15s
- 32 Place vials in boiling bath 5m
- 33 Sonicate 15s
- 34 Vortex and then remove extract to a 50 mL Falcon tube, and then  **until total extract reaches N+1** .  
Keep using the same pasteur pipet

Falcon® Centrifuge Tubes  
Polypropylene, Sterile, 50 mL  
Corning® 352070

35 Combine extract 1~N into the same Falcon tube, keep extract N+1 in the centrifuge tube.

36



Main setup

#### Enzyme treated extract

37 Centrifuge the mixture of 1~N extract @ **3200 rpm, Room temperature, 00:05:00**

General-purpose benchtop centrifuge  
IEC CENTRA CL2  
Thermo 00427 0F

38 Transfer **4 mL** supernatant to a scintillation vial, add **40  $\mu$ L** RNase and **40  $\mu$ L**

## DNase

RNase tends to leave residue in the tip. However one package has only 1 mL RNase, it will be a waste to use reverse pipetting. After dispensing RNase into the vial, use the same tip to draw the solution and gently dispense it back into the solution for about three times, so that there is no residue remaining in the tip. Replace a new tip for the next vial.

39 Incubate at **37 °C**, shake continuously

10m

SHAKING INCUBATOR  
71L  
Corning® LSE™ 6753

40 Add **80 µL** Proteinase

41 Incubate at **37 °C**, shake continuously.

30m

## Enzyme treated N+1 extract

42 Centrifuge extract "N+1" (in the centrifuge tube)  
**3200 rpm, Room temperature, 00:05:00**

43 Transfer **1.5 mL** supernatant into a 2 mL tube, add **15 µL** RNase and **15 µL** DNase

44 Incubate at **37 °C**, shake continuously

10m

Thaw proteinase during the 10-minute incubation.



45 Add  **30  $\mu$ L** Proteinase

46 Incubate at  **37  $^{\circ}$ C** , shake continuously

30m

#### Enzyme treated standard amended extract

47 Prepare PolyP working standard  **7.6  $\mu$ M**

Based on the actual concentration of PolyP (45) primary or secondary standard stock, dilute a certain volume of stock with Tris buffer  **20 mM**  **7.0**


For a final concentration  **7.6  $\mu$ M**

Total volume = 320 X N ( $\mu$ L)




N = sample number

FW(45Na2O.55P2O5)=10600


Mol of PO<sub>3</sub> per mol of PolyP (45) = 110

48 Transfer  **1680  $\mu$ L** of enzyme treated extract into a scintillation vial.

Reverse pipetting

49 Add  **320  $\mu$ L**  **7.6  $\mu$ M** polyP working standard to  **1680  $\mu$ L** of enzyme treated extract, vortex.

#### Load microtiter plate

50 Load  **250  $\mu$ L** samples to the microplate. Organize samples as shown in the following scheme:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A	B1	B2	B3	S1	S2	S3	A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	B3
B	B1	B2	B3	S1	S2	S3	A1	A2	A3	B4	B5	B6
C	B4	B5	B6	S4	S5	S6	A4	A5	A6	B7	B8	B9
D	B4	B5	B6	S4	S5	S6	A4	A5	A6	S1	S2	S3
E	B7	B8	B9	S7	S8	S9	A7	A8	A9	S4	S5	S6
F	B7	B8	B9	S7	S8	S9	A7	A8	A9	S7	S8	S9
G												
H	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9			

B: N+1  
S: 1~N  
A: Amended sample

Reverse pipetting

## 51 Prepare DAPI working solution [M]100 uM

Dilute  $\square 2.1 \mu\text{L}$  of [M]14.3 mM DAPI stock with  $\square 300 \mu\text{L}$  MilliQ in a foil wrapped microtube and vortex.

Total volume = 30 X 54 (ul) for one microplate

12.6 ul [M]14.3 mM DAPI stock with  $\square 1800 \mu\text{L}$  MilliQ

## 52 In a dimmed room with only red bulb on, add $\square 30 \mu\text{L}$ DAPI working solution [M]100 uM to each sample in the microplate **except for those labelled with UN.**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A	B1	B2	B3	S1	S2	S3	A1	A2	A3	B1 (UN)	B2 (UN)	B3 (UN)
B	B1	B2	B3	S1	S2	S3	A1	A2	A3	B4 (UN)	B5 (UN)	B6 (UN)
C	B4	B5	B6	S4	S5	S6	A4	A5	A6	B7 (UN)	B8 (UN)	B9 (UN)
D	B4	B5	B6	S4	S5	S6	A4	A5	A6	S1 (UN)	S2 (UN)	S3 (UN)
E	B7	B8	B9	S7	S8	S9	A7	A8	A9	S4 (UN)	S5 (UN)	S6 (UN)
F	B7	B8	B9	S7	S8	S9	A7	A8	A9	S7 (UN)	S8 (UN)	S9 (UN)
G												
H	A1 (UN)	A2 (UN)	A3 (UN)	A4 (UN)	A5 (UN)	A6 (UN)	A7 (UN)	A8 (UN)	A9 (UN)			

B: N+1  
S: 1~N  
A: Amended sample

Use stepper to dispense DAPI is faster but show bigger deviation.

53 Adhere black film on the top of a microplate lid and cover the plate with this lid.

54 Shake at room temperature.

7m

55 Read fluorescence: excitation at 410 nm and emission at 550 nm

#### Calculation

56 Definition of symbol

Symbol	Definition
M	Concentration of standard in one microplate well (nmol) $M = 7.6 \times \left(\frac{160}{1000}\right) \times 0.25 \times 0.001 \times 1000$
$DF_{amend}$	Dilution factor in amended extract $V_{extract} / (V_{extract} + V_{std})$
N	extraction times
$V_{Tris}$	Volume of Tris per extraction (mL)
$V_s$	Volume of sample loaded in microplate, $V_s = 0.25 \text{ mL}$
MW	Molecular weight of polyP, i.e. 101.9617
$DF_{enzyme}$	Dilution factor in enzyme treatment $DF_{enzyme} = (4 + 0.04 + 0.04 + 0.08) / 4$

57

Signal	Color of wells
<i>SignalA(DAPI)</i>	
<i>SignalA(DAPI + std)</i>	
<i>SignalB(DAPI)</i>	
<i>SignalA(unstained)</i>	
<i>SignalA(+std, unstained)</i>	
<i>SignalB(unstained)</i>	

58

$$Signal(polyP) = [SignalA(DAPI) - SignalB(DAPI)] - [SignalA(unstained) - SignalB(unstained)]$$

59

$$Signal(polyP + std) = [SignalA(DAPI + std) - SignalB(DAPI)] - [SignalA(+std, unstained) - SignalB(unstained)]$$

60

$$polyP/well_{nmol} = M \cdot DF_{amend} \cdot \frac{Signal(polyP)}{Signal(polyP+std) - DF_{amend} \cdot Signal(polyP)}$$

61

$$polyP/filter_{\mu g} = 101.96 \cdot (0.001) \cdot V_{Tris} \cdot N \cdot DF_{enzyme} \cdot (polyP / well) / V_s$$



