

1 **Hawai'ián coral holobionts reveal algal and prokaryotic host**
2 **specificity, intraspecific variability in bleaching resistance, and**
3 **common interspecific microbial consortia modulating thermal**
4 **stress responses**

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26 **Abstract**

27 Historically, Hawai'i had few massive coral bleaching events, until two consecutive heatwaves
28 in 2014–2015. Consequent mortality and thermal stress were observed in Kane'ohe Bay
29 (O'ahu). The two most dominant local species exhibited a phenotypic dichotomy of either
30 bleaching resistance or susceptibility (*Montipora capitata* and *Porites compressa*), while the
31 third predominant species (*Pocillopora acuta*) was broadly susceptible to bleaching. In order to
32 survey shifts in coral microbiomes during bleaching and recovery, 50 colonies were tagged and
33 periodically monitored. Metabarcoding of three genetic markers (16S rRNA gene ITS1 and
34 ITS2) followed by compositional approaches for community structure analysis, differential
35 abundance and correlations for longitudinal data were used to temporally compare
36 Bacteria/Archaea, Fungi and Symbiodiniaceae dynamics. *P. compressa* corals recovered faster
37 than *P. acuta* and *Montipora capitata*. Prokaryotic and algal communities were majorly shaped
38 by host species, and had no apparent pattern of temporal acclimatization. Symbiodiniaceae
39 signatures were identified at the colony scale, and were often related to bleaching susceptibility.
40 Bacterial compositions were practically constant between bleaching phenotypes, and more
41 diverse in *P. acuta* and *M. capitata*. *P. compressa*'s prokaryotic community was dominated by a
42 single bacterium. Compositional approaches (via microbial balances) allowed the identification
43 of fine-scale differences in the abundance of a consortium of microbes, driving changes by
44 bleaching susceptibility and time across all hosts. The three major coral reef founder-species in
45 Kane'ohe Bay revealed different phenotypic and microbiome responses after 2014–2015
46 heatwaves. It is difficult to forecast, a more successful strategy towards future scenarios of
47 global warming. Differentially abundant microbial taxa across time and/or bleaching
48 susceptibility were broadly shared among all hosts, suggesting that locally, the same microbes
49 may modulate stress responses in sympatric coral species. Our study highlights the potential of
50 investigating microbial balances to identify fine-scale microbiome changes, serving as local
51 diagnostic tools of coral reef fitness.

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54 **Keywords**

55 Coral microbiome, thermal bleaching, compositional analysis, microbial balances,

56 Symbiodiniaceae ITS2 profiles.

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58 **1. Introduction**

59

60 Microbial symbioses play critical roles in the ecology and evolution of corals
61 (Ainsworth et al., 2020; Bourne et al., 2016). The majority of research on microbial
62 communities in corals has focused on single celled dinoflagellates in the family
63 Symbiodiniaceae (zooxanthellae), since these symbionts play a large role in coral health and
64 nutrition (Baker, 2003; Sampayo et al., 2008; D'Angelo, 2015). Less studied are the populations
65 of Bacteria, Archaea and even Fungi that associate with corals forming the coral holobiont
66 (Bourne et al., 2016). As seawater temperatures increase, coral bleaching is occurring more
67 frequently around the world, which is a stress-induced disruption of symbiosis between the host
68 and symbiotic algae, causing a “bleached” pale-to-white appearance of affected colonies
69 (Douglas 2003). Bleached corals, depleted of symbiotic algae (Fitt et al., 2001; Jokiel 2004;
70 Falkowski et al., 1984) may effectively starve until the symbiosis is reestablished (Baker 2001).
71 Resistance and recovery following bleaching are highly variable both among and within coral
72 species, and may be influenced by environmental factors (e.g., light, temperature, symbiont
73 availability), as well as traits of the host and its associated microbial communities (Edmunds
74 1994; Fitt et al., 2001; Baird et al., 2009; Grottoli et al., 2014; Conti-Jerpe et al., 2020;
75 Ainsworth and Gates, 2016). Additionally, the coral animal may be able to switch to
76 heterotrophy to mitigate starvation, and recover faster due to the accumulation of lipids
77 (Grottoli et al., 2006; Hughes and Grottoli 2013; Wall et al., 2019; Conti-Jerpe et al., 2020);
78 while genetic and epigenetic processes may also promote stress resilience (Edmunds 1994; Fitt
79 et al., 2001; Grottoli et al., 2014; Baird et al., 2009; Putnam and Gates 2015).

80 The diversity of Symbiodiniaceae in relation to coral bleaching has been researched for
81 over 30 years (Rowan and Powers 1991; van Oppen and Medina 2020), as different genotypes
82 have different physiological responses to abiotic conditions (Baker 2003; Sampayo et al., 2008).
83 For instance, there are thermally tolerant symbionts (e.g., *Cladocopium thermophilum*,
84 *Durusdinium glynnii*, *D. trenchii*) that increase bleaching resistance of coral hosts (Baker 2001;

85 Berkelmans and van Oppen 2006, Sampayo et al., 2008; Fisher et al., 2012; Hume et al., 2015;
86 Silverstein et al., 2015). The majority of coral species associate with a single species of
87 Symbiodiniaceae (LaJeunesse et al., 2018; Howells et al., 2020), but some are capable of
88 hosting multiple species and/or genera within one coral colony (Rowan et al., 1997; Baker
89 2003; Gardner et al., 2019; Hume et al., 2019, 2020). These two strategies are illustrated in
90 three dominant sympatric corals found in Hawai'i, with *Porites compressa* only presenting
91 *Cladocopium* C15, *Pocillopora acuta* combining *C. pacificum/C. latusorum* (C1d/C42), and
92 *Montipora capitata* hosting either *Cladocopium* C31 or *Durusdinium glynnii*, or both
93 simultaneously in the same colonies (LaJuenesse et al., 2004; Innis et al., 2018; Stat et al., 2013;
94 Turnham et al., 2021). There is some evidence of symbiont shuffling in some coral species
95 (Baker 2001, Cunning et al., 2015), but this may occur rarely or not at all in others, as reported
96 in *Pocillopora* spp. (McGinley et al., 2012) and *M. capitata* (Cunning et al., 2016). This
97 inflexibility could be intrinsic of those holobionts, or due to the particular conditions of
98 disturbance and recovery not favoring Symbiodiniaceae rearrangements.

99 Beyond Symbiodiniaceae, patterns of symbiosis with microorganisms forming the coral
100 holobiont are less understood (Amend et al., 2012; Ainsworth and Gates, 2016; Boilard et al.,
101 2020). The coral prokaryotic microbiome is thought to have a core component (Ainsworth et al.,
102 2015; Hernandez-Agreda et al., 2017), as well as a set of unique microbes (Hernandez-Agreda
103 et al., 2018), and rare dynamic taxa that can vary in individuals even within species (Epstein et
104 al., 2019). Stability in coral microbial associations may be beneficial or deleterious, depending
105 on the context (Ainsworth and Gates, 2016). Community shifts involving increases in
106 opportunistic, potentially pathogenic taxa and decreases in beneficial taxa, have been observed
107 during induced and natural bleaching stress (Bourne et al., 2005; Littman et al., 2011); including
108 studies on *P. compressa* (Vega Thurber et al., 2009) and *Pocillopora* (Tout et al., 2015). Other
109 work has shown that microbial stability may either promote thermal tolerance (Ziegler et al.,
110 2017; Epstein et al., 2019; Gardner et al., 2019), and/or hamper acclimatization, with deleterious
111 effects on the host (Pogoreutz et al., 2018). As with Symbiodiniaceae, prokaryotic associates

112 may include taxa able to confer stress tolerance to the holobiont (van Oppen and Medina 2020;
113 Ainsworth et al., 2020).

114 In 2014 and 2015, there were repeated massive bleaching episodes in the Hawaiian
115 archipelago (Ritson-Williams and Gates 2020). These thermal stress events prompted us to
116 survey the fate of coral microbiomes (Symbiodinaceae, Archaea/Bacteria, Fungi) over time
117 during and after the heatwaves in the field. In Kane‘ohe Bay, Oahu, both *Montipora capitata*
118 and *Porites compressa* had bleaching susceptible *vs* bleaching resistant phenotypes, while only
119 bleaching susceptible colonies of *P. acuta* were observed. All these three dominant species were
120 monitored and sampled throughout a year. There has been extensive research on these coral
121 species in Hawaii (e.g., Putnam and Gates 2015; Cunning et al., 2016; Wall et al., 2019;
122 Matsuda et al., 2020; Ritson-Williams and Gates 2020; Innis et al., 2018), however, there is
123 little information about their associated microbiota (e.g., Salerno et al., 2011; Shore-Maggio et
124 al., 2015; Epstein et al., 2019). This study quantifies temporal dynamics in coral microbiomes
125 using amplicon sequencing of multiple gene regions for multiple microbial compartments,
126 coupled with compositional data analysis, to track symbiont shifts in multiple bleaching
127 phenotypes within and among coral species. We further inspect for microbial sentinels within
128 the coral holobionts able to diagnose fluctuations from healthy to distressed/diseased states.

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130

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132 **2. Materials and Methods**

133

134 **2.1. Study site and sampling**

135 Consecutive coral bleaching events occurred in Hawai‘i during the late summers of
136 2014 and 2015 (Ritson-Williams and Gates 2020). The present study focused on corals from
137 Reef 25 in the central portion of Kane‘ohe Bay, O‘ahu Island (N 21.461, W 157.823). In
138 October 2014, 20 colonies of *Montipora capitata* (Mcap) and 20 *Porites compressa* (Pcom)

139 were tagged as adjacent pairs (ten totally bleached and ten non-bleached –fully dark brown,
140 hereinafter referred to as “B” and “NB” colonies respectively for each species); along with ten
141 colonies of fully bleached *Pocillopora acuta* (Pacu, there were no individuals of *P. acuta* that
142 did not bleach). All tagged colonies came from 4–5 m depth, and were 50 in total (n = 10 for
143 each sample group: Mcap_B, Mcap_NB, Pcom_B, Pcom_NB, and Pacu _B). One coral
144 fragment (1.5 cm long) was repeatedly sub-sampled from every tagged coral on five occasions:
145 M0 = Month 0 – October (24th) 2014; M1 = Month 1 – November (24th) 2014; M3 = Month 3 –
146 January (14th) 2015; M6 = Month 6 – May (6th) 2015; and M12 = Month 12 – September (15th)
147 2015, yielding a total of 250 coral fragments (Fig. 1). Covariates used in downstream analyses
148 are given in Table S1. Coral fragments (~ 1 cm³) were collected at each time point by
149 snorkelers, placed in individual sterile bags and snap-frozen in liquid N within 1 minute of
150 collection. All fragments were maintained at -80 °C until processed.

151

152 **2.2. DNA extraction, library preparation, and sequencing**

153 DNA from coral fragments was extracted using PowerSoil® DNA Isolation Kit (Mo
154 Bio Laboratories) following manufacturer’s instructions. Amplicon sequencing of ribosomal
155 RNA (rRNA) target gene markers for three microbial sets: Bacteria/Archaea (16S), Fungi
156 Internal Transcribed Spacer 1 (ITS1) and Symbiodiniaceae (ITS2) was performed in three
157 separate multiplexed runs. Due to technical issues, DNA samples from month M12 (Sept 2015)
158 could not be sequenced for the ITS2 marker. Illumina protocol was applied with a two-PCR
159 approach and two dual-index strategy (Caporaso et al., 2012; Kozich et al., 2013). Primer sets
160 used were: bacterial/archaeal specific primers for V₄ region (*Escherichia coli* position: 515–
161 806) of the small-subunit ribosomal RNA (16S) gene (515F –GTGYCAGCMGCCGCGTAA
162 Parada et al., 2016 and 806R –GGACTACNVGGTWTCTAAT Apprill et al., 2015); ITS-
163 DinoF (GTGAATTGCAGA ACTCCGTG) and ITS2rev2 (CCTCCGCTTACTTATATGCTT
164 (Franklin et al., 2012) targeting the ITS2 for Symbiodiniaceae library; and fungi-specific
165 primers ITS1F (CTTGGTCATTTAGAGGAAGTAA;Gardes and Bruns, 1993) and ITS2R-
166 CoralBetter (GTGARCCAAGAGATCCRTT; designed in the present study) for ITS1.

167 Amplifications were performed in 25 μ l reactions with NEBNext® Q5® Hot Start HiFi PCR
168 Master Mix (New England Biolabs, Inc.), 0.8 μ l BSA (Bovine Serum Albumin; 20 mg/ml), 1 μ l
169 of each 5 μ M primer, and 1.5 μ l of template. Reactions were under the thermocycling profile: 98
170 °C for 2 min, then 28 cycles of 98 °C for 15 s, 53 °C for 30 s, 72 °C for 30 s, final extension at
171 72 °C for 2 min. The second Index PCR to attach dual indexes and Illumina sequencing adapters
172 used forward primers with the 5'-3' Illumina i5 adapter (AATGATACGGCGACCAACCGA
173 GATCTACAC), an 8–10bp barcode and a primer pad; and reverse fusion primers with 5'-3'
174 Illumina i7 adapter (CAAGCAGAAGACGGCATACGAGAT), an 8–10 bp barcode, a primer
175 pad. Reactions were made in 25 μ l with 0.5 μ l of each 5 μ M primer, and 1 μ l of corresponding
176 products from first amplicon PCR reactions diluted (1:30), and with a temperature regime of: 98
177 °C for 2 min, then 28 cycles of 98 °C for 15 s, 55 °C for 30 s, 72 °C for 30 s, final extension at
178 72 °C for 2 min. The PCR products were purified and pooled equimolar on Just-a-Plate™ 96
179 PCR Purification and Normalization Kit plates following manufacturer's instructions (Charm
180 Biotec). Paired-end sequencing was performed on an Illumina MiSeq sequencer 2 x 300 flow
181 cell at 10 pM at Core Lab, Hawai'i Institute of marine Biology (USA).

182

183 **2.3. Bioinformatics analysis**

184 **2.3.1 Sequence processing for 16 S V₄ and ITS1 sets**

185 Fastq files containing demultiplexed 16S–V₄ and ITS1 paired-end reads were imported
186 into QIIME2 v.2020.11 (Bolyen et al., 2019). DADA2 (Callahan et al., 2016) was used for
187 “denoising” 16S data in paired-end mode. The ITS1 region was first extracted using ITSxpress
188 (Rivers et al., 2018). Only forward reads as in Pauvert et al., (2019) were denoised in single-end
189 mode with DADA2 (Callahan et al., 2016), and filtered from non fungal ITS sequences (Tables
190 S2A and S2B). Taxonomic annotation was performed using a pre-trained Naïve Bayes classifier
191 (sklearn (Bokulich et al., 2018a, 2018c) against SILVA reference (99% identity) database v.128
192 (Quast et al., 2013; Yilmaz et al., 2014) trimmed to span the V₄ region (291 bp) for the 16S
193 data. While for the ITS1 set, UNITE reference database (v. 1.12.2017) was customized adding

194 outgroup metazoan sequences from NCBI to check for host co-amplification (as in McGee et
195 al., 2019; Supplementary Material S1).

196

197 **2.3.2. Sequence processing for ITS2 set**

198 Demultiplexed paired-end reads from the ITS2 Symbiodiniaceae marker were submitted
199 to SymPortal (SymPortal.org; Hume et al., 2019) to obtain ITS2 type profile predictions,
200 reflecting the “defining intragenomic [sequence] variants” (DIVs) in order of their relative
201 abundance. Absolute abundance counts tables for ITS2 type profiles and underlying ITS2
202 sequences were formatted and imported into QIIME2 v.2020.11 (Bolyen et al., 2019) for
203 downstream analyses (Supplementary Material S1; and Table S2C).

204

205 **2.3.3. Microbial community analysis**

206 16S ASVs and ITS2 sequence compositions were analyzed using DEICODE
207 (<https://library.qiime2.org/plugins/deicode/19/>) diversity method based on Aitchison distances
208 and robust principal component analysis (RPCA) for compositional data (Aitchison 1982;
209 Martino et al. 2019). Standard diversity distance metrics that do not account for
210 compositionality of data were also computed on QIIME2 v.2020.11 (Bolyen et al., 2019).
211 Statistics were calculated using q2-diversity adonis for multi-factor permutational multivariate
212 analysis of variance (PERMANOVA). The most informative formula in the model for the 16S
213 data was “Species*TimePoint+Bleaching”, while “Species*Bleaching” was the most explicative
214 for ITS2. Pairwise comparisons for single covariates were run with q2-beta-group-significance.
215 In all cases permutations were set to 999, and tests corrections significance to q value > 0.05
216 (i.e., FDR adjusted p value; Supplementary Material S1).

217

218 **2.3.4. Longitudinal, differential abundance and co-occurrence cross networks analyses**

219 By simultaneously analyzing our samples across all time points, meaningful signals
220 may be lost at a particular time point. Also, having more than one measurement per subject in
221 temporal/longitudinal or paired samples experiments violates independency assumptions

222 between samples of Kruskal-Wallis tests. Therefore, pairwise PERMANOVA comparisons
223 were run for each timepoint by species. Further pertinent methods for differential abundance
224 (Morton et al. 2019; Fedarko et al. 2020), longitudinal analyses –including pairwise
225 differences/distances, linear-mixed-effects (LME) (Bokulich et al. 2018b), and co-occurrence
226 cross network analyses that take into account repeated measurements and data compositionality
227 (Shaffer 2020; Shannon et al., 2003) were performed as described in Supplementary Material
228 S1.

229 R (RStudio) was applied for additional statistics and plotting (<http://www.r-project.org>).
230

231

232

233 **3. Results**

234

235 **3.1 Bacteria/Archaea composition based on 16S rRNA gene data**

236 ***3.1.1 Alpha and beta diversity***

237 Pacu and Mcap corals reported higher bacterial diversity, richness and evenness
238 (Shannon, Observed and Pielou's evenness) indexes compared to Pcom (Fig. 2, Fig. S3.1;
239 Kruskal–Wallis $H=137.94$, $p < 0.001$, $p = 5.56 \times 10^{-18}$). Alpha diversity did not yield significant
240 differences within species between B vs NB colonies in Mcap and Pcom, or across time points
241 in any species (Tables S4; Supplementary Material S2 and S3).

242 Differences in beta diversity were found by Species, reporting different microbial
243 communities in the three host species, and in the interaction Species*TimePoint; while Mcap
244 and Pacu were more diverse from Pcom for all metrics (PERMANOVA 999 permutations,
245 significance set to $p < 0.05$; Tables S5). Since Bacterial composition was mostly determined by
246 host species, according to all alpha and beta diversity indexes, downstream analyses were
247 performed within species, to test for changes over time in all three species, and between
248 bleached and non-bleached colonies in Mcap and Pcom. Based on Aitchison distances, bacterial

249 composition varied in Mcap NB between M12 and M0, and from M12 with respect to the other
250 months according to Jaccard (Supplementary Material S2 and S3; Tables S6, S7). No significant
251 longitudinal trend was found in beta diversity across nor between timepoints in any B vs NB
252 corals (Tables S6, S7, Supplementary Material S2 and S3).

253

254 **3.1.2 Bacterial/Archaeal community compositions**

255 A total of 1257 ASVs were distributed in 979 Mcap, 523 Pcom, and 737 Pacu
256 associated taxa. Taxonomy annotation at the genus level yielded 331, 211 and 279 bacterial and
257 archaeal genera; this was out of a total of 93, 99 and 40 coral colony fragments belonging to
258 Mcap, Pcom and Pacu respectively. In Mcap corals a bacterial strain within order Myxococcales
259 made up > 50% relative abundance in 35 % of the samples. Other dominant genera were
260 *Acinetobacter* –with preponderance of *A. calcoaceticus*, and *Endozoicomonas*. The least diverse
261 bacterial communities were found in Pcom, predominantly composed of *Endozoicomonas*. A
262 single phylotype in this genus accounted for > 90% in relative abundance in 65 % of Pcom
263 samples. Other representative taxa were *Acinetobacter*, *Candidatus Amoebophylus*, and order
264 Myxococcales. Pacu was dominated by Proteobacteria, with one strain covering > 50% relative
265 abundance in 43 % of the samples. Most contributing genera included *Acinetobacter* (chiefly *A.*
266 *calcoaceticus*) and *Candidatus Amoebophylus*, and there was a large proportion of unclassified
267 taxa. In variable abundances, *Pseudomonas*, *Bacillus*, *Staphylococcus*, *Synechococcus*,
268 *Lawsonella* and unidentified strains in Myxococcales were found in all three species. While,
269 *Micrococcus*, *Corynebacteria*, *Turicella*, *Cyanobium*, *Brevundimonas*, *Maritimonas*,
270 *Aerococcus* and *Geobacillus* were more linked to Mcap and Pdam (Fig. 2; Supplementary
271 Material S2 and S3). All coral species shared 237 taxa (19 %), with Mcap sharing more taxa
272 with Pacu (542; 43 %), than with Pcom (395; 31 %), and Pcom and Pacu sharing the least
273 proportion of phylotypes (282; 22 %). The largest number of unique taxa was recorded in Mcap
274 (279), followed by Pacu (149) and Pcom (83).

275

276 **3.1.3. Phylotype-wise differential abundance analysis of 16S rRNA gene data**

277 The importance (i.e., fold change) of each ASV in relation to the covariates TimePoint
278 (month after bleaching, M0–M12) and Bleaching susceptibility (B vs NB) was calculated in
279 separate analyses within species to create microbial balances.

280 In Mcap the most informative balance defining longitudinal changes in B vs NB
281 microbiomes consisted of fifteen ASVs in genera: *Endozoicomonas*, *Acinetobacter*,
282 *Pseudomonas* in the numerator; and *Micrococcus*, *Synechococcus*, *Staphylococcus*, *Lawsonella*,
283 *Bacillus* and order Myxococcales, in the denominator (91 out of 93 samples retained). In M0
284 and M6 NB colonies (ranked to numerator taxa) exhibited significantly higher log-ratios than B
285 (associated to denominator phylotypes; Welch's tests, $p < 0.05$). In M1 and M3, NB had lower
286 log-ratios than B colonies, but the differences were not significant. In M1 and M3, *Bacillus* was
287 not detected as differential taxa, and *Synechococcus* lost relevance in M6 (Material S4, Tables
288 S8). Longitudinally, for this microbial balance, Mcap_B had higher log-ratio rankings in M3
289 compared with M6 and M12; whereas Mcap_NB displayed lower log-ratios in all time points
290 with respect to M0 (LME; $p < 0.05$; Fig. 3).

291 Differentially abundant taxa in the balance of Pcom comprised two *Endozoicomonas*
292 strains in the numerator, along with fluctuating taxa in *Candidatus Amoebophilus*,
293 *Acinetobacter calcoaceticus*, *Pseudomonas stutzeri*, *Synechococcus*, *Roseitalea*; over
294 *Staphylococcus*, *Micrococcus*, Neisseriaceae and five *Endozoicomonas* in the denominator
295 (Material S4, Tables S8). Pcom_B corals revealed higher log-ratios in M1, with respect to
296 Pcom_NB (Welch's tests, $p < 0.05$; Material S4, Tables S8). Longitudinally, Pcom_B displayed
297 higher log-ratios in M1 in comparison to M0 and M6 (LME; $p < 0.05$), instead Pcom_NB
298 showed stability across time points (LME; $p > 0.05$; Fig. 3, Material S4, Tables S8). Further
299 longitudinal analyses can be found in Supplementary Material S2.

300 The most discriminative microbial balance of Pacu comprised fifteen taxa assigned to:
301 *Endozoicomonas*, *Cyanobium*, *Acinetobacter*, *Pseudomonas*, *Neisseriaceae* in the numerator;
302 and *Micrococcus*, *Lawsonella*, *Synechococcus*, *Bacillus*, *Staphylococcus* in the denominator (39
303 out of 40 samples kept). M0 colonies had lower log-ratios with respect to all the other time
304 points (LME; $p < 0.05$; Tables S8; Fig. 3).

305 The longitudinal behavior (over time) of bacterial genera represented in the above
306 microbial balances for the three host species were inspected in trajectory plots using centered
307 log ratio (CLR) abundances. The investigated genera included: *Endozoicomonas*, *Acinetobacter*,
308 *Bacillus*, *Candidatus Amoebophilus*, *Cyanobium*, *Lawsonella*, *Micrococcus*, *Pseudomonas*,
309 *Staphylococcus*, *Synechococcus* and *Roseitalea*. Phylotypes included in the differential balances
310 appertaining to family Neisseriaceae and order Myxococcales, but not assigned to genus level,
311 were not included in this analysis (see Fig. 3, and Supplementary Material S2 for detailed
312 interpretations).

313

314

315 **3.2. Fungi composition based on ITS1 data**

316 Untargeted host co-amplification was a major constraint in characterizing fungal
317 communities, despite the new primer designed to bypass metazoan DNA. We found 94.8 %
318 coral co-amplification, retrieving only 5.2 % overall fungal sequences. The rate of co-
319 amplification varied among species, with *P. compressa* displaying the largest untargeted co-
320 amplification (98.4 %), followed by *M. capitata* (95.6 %), and *P. acuta* (56 %) (Supplementary
321 Material S2). The most represented fungal species retrieved were *Malassezia restricta*, *M.*
322 *globosa*, *Hortaea_werneckii*, *Aspergillus penicillioides*, *Phellinus gilvus*. No further statistical
323 analysis was performed due to insufficient/uneven diversity coverage.

324

325

326 **3.3. Symbiodiniaceae composition based on ITS2 data**

327 **3.3.1. Symbiodiniaceae ITS2 type profiles**

328 ITS2 type profiles were 29 in total, 27 belonging to the genus *Cladocopium* and 2 to
329 *Durusdinium*. Their associations with corals depended on host species, bleaching susceptibility,
330 and their interaction (PERMANOVA 999 permutations, $p < 0.05$). Certain coral colonies were
331 stable over time in Symbiodiniaceae composition, but others experienced temporal shifts

332 without a clear pattern (Tables S9). *Cladocopium* profiles were dominant in the three host
333 species. Only one type profile was shared between Mcap and Pacu (C1d), the rest (95 %) were
334 only found in single host species. Mcap had the most varied profiling –10 *Cladocopium*, 2
335 *Durusdinium*, and were the only corals harboring *Durusdinium* types. Pcom and Pacu reported
336 10 and 7 distinct unshared *Cladocopium* profiles respectively (Fig. 4). The resistant phenotypes
337 Mcap_NB reported 9 *Cladocopium* and 2 *Durusdinium* profiles, as compared to Mcap_B with 5
338 and 1 respectively. *Durusdinium* profiles always occurred mixed with *Cladocopium* in 4–5
339 Mcap_NB colonies per time point. Pcom_B displayed more assorted type profiles across
340 individuals within each time point than Pcom_NB. Mcap_B corals acquired more varied ITS2
341 profiling with time –including a *Durusdinium* profile acquired in one Mcap_B colony in M6,
342 but this effect was not statistically supported. With the exception of one sample in Mcap_B and
343 one in Pcom_N both in M6, the presence of mixed ITS2 type profiles was only ascertained in
344 Mcap_NB colonies with an incidence of 48% (Fig. 4).

345

346 3.3.2. *Underlying Symbiodiniaceae ITS2 sequence composition*

347 Our corals contained 173 *Cladocopium* and 28 *Durusdinium* ITS2 sequences ($\geq 1\%$
348 abundance). By coral species and bleaching susceptibility the number of different *Cladocopium*
349 / *Durusdinium* sequences was higher in NB colonies in Mcap (Mcap_B 51 / 20 vs Mcap_NB 80
350 / 28), as opposed to Pcom that showed more sequence variability in B (Pcom_B 82 / 3 vs
351 Pcom_NB 62 / 3); while Pacu reported 19 / 5.

352 Within the same coral species, ITS2 profiles shared common major sequences
353 (predominant DIVs within type profiles), and were distinguished by other major and minor
354 sequences (nonmajor DIVs, Fig. 4). Across different host species, ITS2 profiles did not share
355 major sequences. Major *Cladocopium* DIVs designating profiles in *M. capitata* were C31 and
356 C17d, in *P. compressa* C15, and in *P. acuta* C1d. *Durusdinium* major DIVs were D4 and D1,
357 followed by D6, only represented as major sequences in *M. capitata*. Variations in ITS2 profiles
358 within the same colonies across time points were therefore due to the loss, gain or substitution
359 of minor sequences prompting a shift in profile assignment (Fig. 4).

360 ITS2 sequence compositions confirmed the observed pattern of ITS2 profiles, highly
361 structured by host species and bleaching susceptibility, with no consistent temporal shifts. In the
362 RPCA biplots Mcap showed differences in B vs NB colonies at M0, M1 and M3, being D1, D4
363 and D6 the most correlated DIVs with NB. Pcom revealed dissimilarity
364 between B vs NB colonies at M0, and here D6, C15cc, C3, 70890_C and C3dg were major
365 drivers of NB clustering, versus C15id and 70894_C associated to B (Fig. 5 and PERMANOVA
366 999 permutations, $p < 0.05$, Tables S10, S11, S12; Supplementary Material S2 and S3).

367

368 **3.3.3. Phylotype-wise differential abundance analysis of ITS2 data**

369 Selection of the 43% most differentially abundant ITS2 sequences in relation to
370 covariates TimePoint (M0–M12) and Bleaching susceptibility (B vs NB) in *M. capitata* yielded
371 23 numerator and 23 denominator phylotypes (keeping 90.78 % samples). This balance
372 discriminated Mcap_B with higher log-ratios from Mcap_NB corals in all time points.
373 Numerator DIVs associated to Mcap_B included some C31, a few C17, C21 and other
374 *Cladocopium* DIVs; denominator DIVs correlated to Mcap_NB comprised 55 % *Durusdinium*
375 DIVs (D4, D1, D6, D1ab, D3h) along with a few C17 and C21 among other *Cladocopium* DIVs
376 (Fig. 5; Tables S13).

377 In *P. compressa*, the top 25 % differential ITS2 sequences (maintaining 91.25 %
378 samples) resulted in 12 phylotypes (C3 and other *Cladocopium* DIVs) in the numerator
379 correlated Pcom_B colonies, and 12 denominator phylotypes (several C15 and other
380 *Cladocopium* DIVs) associated to Pcom_NB in M0 and M1. In M3 and M6, when corals
381 recovered colouration, Pcom_B and Pcom_NB corals recorded similar log-ratios (Fig. 5; Tables
382 S13).

383 In *P. acuta* the model with the co-variate “TimePoint” was uninformative with respect
384 to the null model (adding “1” in the formula), indicating no response of Symbiodiniaceae across
385 time.

386 Log-ratios in the balances of differentially abundant ITS2 sequences tracked
387 longitudinally over time had no significant shifts in any species (LME; $P<[z] < 0.05$;
388 Supplementary Material S5, Tables S13).

389

390 **3.4. Cross networks between 16S rRNA gene ASVs and ITS2 profiles**

391 Co-occurrence cross networks illustrated potential interaction patterns among bacteria
392 and Symbiodiniaceae, allowing to detect changes in coral microbiomes' structure. In Mcap_B a
393 simple network in M0 formed by two C31 *Cladocopium* ITS2 profiles and few bacteria,
394 increased conspicuously in bacterial nodes from M1 to M6, together with the addition of
395 another C31 and a *Durusdinium* D4/D1 nodes in M3 and M6. Mcap_NB started with a complex
396 network composed by four C31, two C17d/C31 and two D4/D1 profiles connected with dense
397 agglomerations of bacteria. The network became less complex in M1 and M3, with the
398 exclusion of two C31 profiles; and acquired more bacterial nodes again over M6, with the re-
399 inclusion of C31 nodes and exclusion of a C17d/C31 node. Pcom_B started with three C15
400 profiles connected to few bacteria. Bacterial nodes increased over M1 with the addition of a
401 C15 profile, and declined in M6 with the removal of a C15 node. Pcom_NB networks
402 maintained three C15 profiles and few bacteria nodes over M0–M3. In M6 a C1d profile was
403 added, but bacterial nodes and edges diminished. Network complexity increased in Pacu_B
404 from M0–M1, with the increase of C1d profiles from three to four nodes, and with a progressive
405 increment of bacterial nodes over M1–M6. Co-occurrence interconnections were predominant
406 over co-exclusion, except in Mcap_B at M1 and Pacu_B at M3. Networks in susceptible-B
407 colonies in the three species displayed increased positive interactions during bleaching
408 recovery. Whereas, in resistant-NB corals the number of interactions decreased in Mcap_NB, or
409 fluctuated in Pcom_NB. Consistently, Pcom_B and Pcom_NB maintained smaller networks
410 (fewer nodes and edges) than the rest, with the punctual exception of Mcap_B in M0 (Fig. 6;
411 Supplementary Material S2 for detailed results).

412

413

414 4. Discussion

415

416 Historically, massive coral bleaching in Hawaiian ecosystems was unusual, until 1996
417 (Bahr et al., 2015). The consecutive heatwaves of 2014 and 2015 in Kane‘ohe Bay allowed us
418 to track temporal shifts in bleaching susceptible and resistant coral microbiomes *in situ*, during
419 and after the bleaching peaks. Pcom_B corals recovered faster (after ~2.5 months) than Pacu_B
420 (~3 months), and Mcap_B (~6 months), according to color scores (Ritson-Williams and Gates
421 2020), yet actual Symbiodineaceae densities could have been regained faster (Cunning et al.,
422 2016). Prokaryotes, in turn, were expected to exhibit more rapid responses to stressors, due to
423 their fast generation times (Ziegler et al., 2017; Glasl et al., 2017; Pogoreutz et al., 2018).

424 Algal and prokaryotic communities in our corals followed a species-specific pattern,
425 frequent in sympatric populations (Gardner et al., 2019; Howells et al., 2020), whereas
426 intraspecific Symbiodiniaceae signatures were identified at the colony scale (Rouzé et al.,
427 2019). Mcap had the most variable ITS2 profiling, followed by Pcom and Pacu, whilst
428 Symbiodiniaceae composition was influenced by bleaching susceptibility. Algal-genotypes
429 conferring different bleaching resistance in conspecific hosts may appertain to the same genus,
430 as in Pcom (Sampayo et al., 2008), or to different ones as in Mcap (Berkelmans and van Oppen
431 2006; Gardner et al., 2019). But also, susceptibility can be independent from symbiont-type
432 (Smith et al., 2017; Howells et al., 2020).

433 Bacterial compositions were more diverse in Mcap and Pacu than in Pcom, and were
434 practically constant between bleaching phenotypes. Microbial stability after natural thermal
435 disturbance has been reported in corals undergoing sub-bleaching (Epstein et al., 2019) and
436 bleaching (Gardner et al., 2019). While, community shifts were documented after induced stress
437 (Bourne et al., 2005; Vega Thurber et al., 2009; Littman et al., 2011; Ziegler et al., 2016). In our
438 corals, certain bacterial-ASVs/ Symbiodiniaceae-DIVs were differentially abundant across time
439 and/or bleaching susceptibility, highlighting the potential of fine-scale microbiome changes in
440 coral resilience (Glasl et al., 2017; Ziegler et al., 2019; Epstein et al., 2019). Below we discuss

441 the dynamics of coral microbiomes during the process of bleaching and recovery in the different
442 host species.

443

444 **4.1. *Pocillopora acuta***

445 Pacu had the highest bleaching incidence, and was associated with eight fluctuating
446 Symbiodiniaceae C1d-profiles. This agreed with the C1d-dominance described for this species
447 in Hawai'i (LaJeunesse et al., 2004). Predicted profiles dominated by C1d and C42.2 likely
448 reflect the preponderance of mixed *Cladocopium pacificum* and *C. latusorum* (Turnham et al.,
449 2021). Lack of acclimatization patterns agrees with stabilities of dominant symbionts in
450 pocilloporids under thermal stress. Whilst, profile shifting driven by minor ITS2-sequences
451 shifts, is presumably matching with background genotype variability reported in previous
452 studies (Stat et al., 2009; McGinley et al., 2012; Epstein et al., 2019). In other geographies,
453 higher bleaching thresholds have been reported in populations harboring *Durusdinium glynnii*
454 (previously D1) (Glynn et al., 2001; Wham et al., 2017; Brener-Raffalli et al., 2018; Li et al.,
455 2021; Zhou et al., 2021), or in chunky (versus fine) morphotypes, even when presenting C1d
456 (Smith et al., 2017; Epstein et al., 2019). Therefore, the bleaching incidence observed in Pacu
457 could rely on a combination of having fine morphology and *Cladocopium*-profiles, both
458 correlated to higher susceptibilities (Smith et al., 2017).

459 Bacterial communities were dominated by phylum Proteobacteria, followed by
460 Bacteroidetes, Actinobacteria, Firmicutes and Cyanobacteria, similar to pocilloporids from
461 other regions; whereas, Family Amoebophilaceae (mostly *Candidatus Amoebophylus*) and
462 genus *Acinetobacter* (largely *A. calcoaceticus*) were more preeminent, and *Endozoicomonas*
463 less abundant in Pacu (Bourne and Munn 2005; Tout et al., 2015; Brener-Raffalli et al., 2018; Li
464 et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2021, but see Epstein et al., 2019; Osman et al., 2020). Prokaryotic
465 community, in terms of overall alpha and beta diversity, did not show significant changes over
466 time, as in other surveys involving coral bleaching (Pogoreutz et al., 2018; Gardner et al.,
467 2019). Nonetheless, microbial rearrangements could be detected via balances of differentially
468 abundant taxa, revealing lower log-ratios in corals at the bleaching peak M0. Upon recovery

469 (M1–M12) Pacu was correlated to *Endozoicomonas*, *Cyanobium*, *Acinetobacter*, *Pseudomonas*
470 and *Neisseriaceae*, whereas bleached colonies in M0 were associated to *Micrococcus*,
471 *Lawsonella*, *Synechococcus*, *Bacillus* and *Staphylococcus*. Likewise, cross co-occurrence
472 networks showed an increase in node complexity and positive interconnections from M1. This
473 implied that sparse interactions between bacteria and Symbiodiniaceae during thermal stress,
474 increased in number as algal cells repopulated in the recovery process after M0, yielding larger
475 networks.

476 Recovery in Pacu happened after 2–3 months (Ritson-Williams and Gates 2020);
477 probably thanks to heterotrophic feeding (Lyndby et al., 2020; Dobson et al., 2021) and,
478 microbiome rearrangements in early recovery phases (Santos et al., 2014; Ziegler et al., 2017).
479

480 **4.2. *Montipora capitata***

481 Mcap colonies were associated with *Cladocopium* and *Durusdinium* symbionts. At the
482 DIV level C31, C17 and C21 were predominant genotypes in both B and NB corals, while D4,
483 D1, D6, D1ab and D3h characterized NB colonies, in agreement with recent studies (Matsuda
484 2021). Bleaching resistant Mcap_NB colonies contained either pure C or mixed D/C profiles
485 (50 % of the times), and were different from susceptible Mcap_B, which contained basically C-
486 profiles. Adjacent colonies never shared the same ITS2-profile. In both bleaching phenotypes,
487 six colonies (66 %) maintained their corresponding dominant profiles, the remaining (three)
488 experienced temporal shifts, in agreement with Cunning et al. (2016). C31-C17d-C31.1-C31a-
489 C21-C31f-C17e-C311-C21ac might represent a thermosensitive ITS2-profile, as 8 out of 9
490 Mcap_B bleached colonies in M0 contained this profile, whilst its presence in Mcap_NB (1–2
491 colonies) was always in combination with D-profiles. In purity or mixed, D-genotypes provide
492 thermal resistance in *M. capitata*, but colonies with C-profiling also demonstrated stress-
493 tolerance (Cunning et al., 2016). Our analyses based on ITS2-types (Hume et al., 2019)
494 identified different *Cladocopium* profiles, in comparison to previous surveys reporting solely
495 C31-genotype (LaJeunesse et al., 2004; Stat et al., 2013; Cunning et al., 2016), which could
496 resolve the disparate stress-resistance of Mcap_NB vs Mcap_B. In one exception though, two

497 colonies containing the same profile (C31/C17d-C21-C31.9-C21ac-C17e-C31h-C31i) at M0,
498 one underwent bleaching and the other one not, suggesting multiple factors (including different
499 microenvironments affecting these corals) other than symbiont type regulating thermal
500 tolerance. Mcap_B and Mcap_NB maintained different Symbiodiniaceae compositions, based
501 on profiles and underlying ITS2-sequences, while colony heterogeneity in bleached Mcap_B
502 increased with time, with no clear stabilization pattern. Actually, only one colony acquired a
503 partial *Durusdinium* profile at M6, supporting the low prevalence of symbiont shuffling
504 described in this species (Cunning et al., 2016).

505 Prokaryotic communities were dominated by Proteobacteria (Family P3OB-24, Order
506 Myxococcales), and by genera *Acinetobacter* (largely *A. calcoaceticus*) and *Endozoicomonas*.
507 In general, they matched with *M. capitata* microbiomes, characterized by the presence of
508 Cyanobacteria and Deinococcus-Thermus, and low abundance of *Vibrio* (Shore-Maggio et al.,
509 2015; Beurmann et al., 2018). Even if non statistically significant, increased alpha diversities
510 observed in Mcap_B at M1 and M3 may suggest microbial rearrangements after thermal-stress
511 (Vega Thurber et al., 2009; Tout et al., 2015; McDevitt-Irwin et al., 2017), or seasonal
512 fluctuations in Mcap_NB at M6 (Cunning et al., 2016). Log-ratio rankings of differentially
513 abundant taxa were higher in Mcap_NB with respect to Mcap_B at M0 and M6. At these two
514 time points of symbiont depletion: bleaching peak (M0) and seasonal algal downturn (M6; as in
515 Cunning et al., 2016), Mcap_NB was ranked to numerator taxa –*Endozoicomonas*,
516 *Acinetobacter* and *Pseudomonas*; whereas bleached Mcap_B were correlated to denominator
517 taxa –Myxococcales, *Lawsonella*, *Micrococcus*, *Synechococcus*, *Bacillus* and *Staphylococcus*.
518 Cross networks became more complex in Mcap_B from M1 to M6, as algal densities recovered
519 (M1–M3), and bacteria established interactions with Symbiodiniaceae. Instead, Mcap_NB
520 showed higher network complexity in M0 compared to bleached Mcap_B colonies, reflecting
521 stress response rearrangements between thermo-tolerant algal and prokaryotic symbionts during
522 the heatwave.

523 *M. capitata* was found to rely on heterotrophy to compensate for energy losses when
524 experimentally bleached (Grottoli et al., 2006). Mcap did not evidence such trophic plasticity,

525 and would have regained symbiont populations at expense of biomass resources by January
526 2015 (Wall et al., 2019; Ritson-Williams and Gates 2020), in agreement with the microbial
527 outcomes.

528

529 **4.3. *Porites compressa***

530 ITS2-profiling in Pcom revealed C15-dominance, in accordance with older surveys on
531 *Porites compressa* (LaJeunesse et al., 2004). Pcom_NB and Pcom_B corals held distinct
532 Symbiodiniaceae patterns 70–90 % of the times, across M0–M12. While, other characteristics
533 in the holobiont or microenvironmental variabilities causing different stress conditions, should
534 explain why 20 % adjacent Pcom_B and Pcom_NB colonies sharing the same profiles had
535 different susceptibilities in M0. During the peak of the heatwave in Oct-2014 (M0) Pcom_NB
536 associated to DIVs C15cc and D6, and more often to the ITS2 profile C15-C5ci-C15cc-C15cl-
537 C15n-C15cj-C15l, which could represent a thermotolerant symbiont-type found in 7 out of 10
538 resistant colonies, and in only one susceptible Pcom_B. Accordingly, this profile was less
539 prevailing in M6 (May 2015), coinciding with a period of minor thermal disturbances and lower
540 symbiont abundances (Brown et al., 1999; Cunning et al., 2015). C15-genotypes with higher
541 temperature tolerance were already described associating to *Porites* spp. from the Great Barrier
542 Reef (Fisher et al., 2012). Dissimilarities in ITS2-sequences between Pcom_B and Pcom_NB
543 tended to vanish after M1, reflecting algal rearrangements linked to recovery from this time
544 point. This concurs with coral photo-physiology data supporting intense symbiont repopulation
545 (elevated cell mitosis and photopigment synthesis) from Nov (Wall et al., 2019; Matsuda et al.,
546 2020; Ritson-Williams and Gates 2020).

547 Bacterial communities in Pcom were less diverse than in the other hosts, accounting for
548 many low abundance taxa, and ~ 90 % predominance of a single *Endozoicomonas* microbe. The
549 bacterial community structures were relatively constant, across bleaching phenotypes and time.
550 Salerno et al. (2011) also found stable microbiomes in *P. compressa* under mild thermal
551 treatments; whereas Vega Thurber et al. (2009) observed switches from healthy to pathogenic
552 microbiota after intense high temperature exposures. Both of these thermal stresses were

553 administered in an experimental setting. In our field data the prevalent ASV
554 (694df3c7f8b6b66c922ed51a965d75d0a) matched with a symbiont (Oceanospirillaceae-OTU
555 C7-A01: FJ930289.1; Supplementary Material S2) broadly documented in *Porites* spp.
556 (including *P. compressa* from Maui) and other hermatypic corals from Australia, Hawai‘i, and
557 Bermuda (Speck and Donachie 2012), suggesting a conserved large-scale partnership with
558 corals (Neave et al., 2016). Coral-microbiomes dominated by one or few *Endozoicomonas*
559 phylotypes were described to have microbial inflexibility in stress responses (Pogoreutz et al.,
560 2018). In our susceptible Pcom_B corals dominated by one *Endozoicomonas* strain though, the
561 microbial balance composed by two *Endozoicomonas* (the predominant ASV above and another
562 congeneric strain), *Candidatus Amoebophilus*, *Acinetobacter calcoaceticus*, *Pseudosmonas*
563 *stutzeri*, *Synechococcus* and *Roseitalea* phylotypes; over five antagonistic *Endozoicomonas*
564 strains, *Micrococcus*, *Staphylococcus* and Neisseriaceae taxa, pinpointed a longitudinal
565 discontinuity of increased log-ratios in Pcom_B at M1. Microbial communities of bleaching
566 resistant Pcom_NB phenotypes, in contrast, remained stable and dominated by
567 *Endozoicomonas*. Different from Pogoreutz and co-workers (2018) findings, the relative
568 microbial inflexibility of Pcom and *Endozoicomonas* predominance, could afford benefits in
569 terms of resistance or faster recovery during thermal stress responses.

570 Pcom was characterized by small cross networks with mild fluctuations between
571 heatwaves, reflecting a much simpler microbial community. Increased edge complexity at M1
572 in Pcom_B again suggests a rapid recovery response, with reliance on few bacterial ASVs; as
573 compared to Mcap_B and Pacu_B, reflecting larger bacterial consortia participating in the
574 recovery. Reduced trophic plasticity, and intense loss of Symbiodiniaceae and photosynthetic
575 pigments might obligate Pcom_B to regain symbionts faster, at high biomass investment with
576 respect to the other species (Wall et al., 2019; Matsuda et al., 2020). Furthermore, intense algal
577 repopulation in Pcom_B from October–November 2014 was correlated with low symbiont $\delta^{15}\text{N}$
578 (Wall et al., 2019), and assimilation of ^{15}N depleted sources, possibly derived from diazotroph
579 bacteria via N_2 fixation (Lesser et al., 2007; Cardini et al., 2015; Bednarz et al., 2017). Indeed,

580 differentially abundant taxa ranked to recovering Pcom_B included various diazotroph taxa (see
581 below).

582

583 **4.4. Differentially abundant bacterial taxa defining temporal shifts in bleaching
584 recovery**

585 Coral microbiomes in the present study revealed minor community disruption in
586 response to heatwaves. Similar outcomes were reported previously, together with increases in
587 potentially beneficial (Santos et al., 2014; Epstein et al., 2019). One bacterial group widely
588 associated to corals and documented to display diversified tolerances and/or functional traits to
589 stress conditions is *Endozoicomonas* (Bourne et al., 2005; Vega Thurber et al., 2009; Littman et
590 al., 2011; Neave et al., 2016; McDevitt-Irwin et al., 2017; Pogoreutz et al., 2018; Ziegler et al.,
591 2016, 2017, 2019; Epstein et al., 2019). In our corals, saving an initial decline in Mcap_B at
592 M0, this genus displayed preponderance throughout bleaching stress, in agreement with other
593 studies (Ziegler et al., 2016; Pogoreutz et al., 2018; Epstein et al., 2019). *Endozoicomonas*
594 symbionts are proposed to play three kinds of functions: 1) nutrient acquisition/provision –
595 carbon, nitrogen, sulphur, methane recycling, amino acid production,
596 dimethylsulfoniopropionate (DMSP) metabolism; 2) microbiome modulation –quorum-sensing;
597 and 3) promotion of host health –antimicrobial activity, pathogens exclusion (Neave et al.,
598 2016, 2017). DMSP produced by Symbiodiniaceae and sulfur-derivatives from certain
599 prokaryotes (*Endozoicomonas*, *Acinetobacter*, *Pseudomonas*, *Vibrio*) provide a selective
600 environment structuring bacterial populations (Raina et al., 2010). Hence, upon the downturn of
601 DMSP production throughout bleaching/stress episodes, high abundances of *Endozoicomonas*
602 might modulate microbiomes steadiness (Ziegler et al., 2016; Pogoreutz et al., 2018; Epstein et
603 al., 2019). Further, diazotroph bacteria contribute to homeostasis during bleaching and sub-
604 bleaching recovery after thermal stress (Santos et al., 2014; Epstein et al., 2019), by suppling
605 limiting nitrogen to Symbiodiniaceae (Lesser et al., 2007; Olson et al., 2009; Cardini et al.,
606 2015; Bednarz et al., 2017). Indeed, many differentially abundant taxa positively ranked to our
607 recovering corals included diazotrophs and/or DMSP-metabolizing bacteria: e.g.,

608 *Endozoicomonas*, *Acinetobacter calcoaceticus*, *Pseudomonas stutzeri*, *Cyanobium* (Lalucat et
609 al., 2006; Lesser et al., 2007; Olson et al., 2009; Raina et al., 2010). High occurrence of
610 *Acinetobacter* spp. and *Endozoicomonas* spp. is frequently documented in healthy and bleached
611 Scleractinia, implying synergistic roles in fitness (Cai et al., 2018). Another recently described
612 symbiont in coral holobionts is *Candidatus Amoebophilus*, an intracellular associate of
613 unicellular eukaryotes, like Symbiodiniaceae or amoebae, with undefined role (Huggett and
614 Apprill 2018; Epstein et al., 2019). Differential phylotypes in this genus were correlated to algal
615 repopulation, particularly in Pcom_B. Bleaching entails loss of major nourishment inputs and
616 photoprotection, and corals therefore implement compensatory strategies (Fitt et al., 2001). For
617 instance, bleached corals have been observed to reinforce feeding on planktonic diazotrophs and
618 preferentially on nitrogen-rich *Synechococcus* cyanobacteria (Meunier et al., 2019).
619 Accordingly, bleached colonies and incipient recovery stages in this study were associated to
620 *Synechococcus*; but interestingly also to differential phylotypes with potential UV-absorbing
621 properties, like *Bacillus*, *Staphylococcus* (Ravindran et al., 2013), *Micrococcus* (Arai et al.,
622 1992), and the already mentioned Cyanobacteria –*Cyanobium*, *Synechococcus* (Sinha et al.,
623 2001). Notably, *Bacillus* and *Staphylococcus* strains within the coral mucus have demonstrated
624 to increase their UV-absorbance range in response to elevated temperatures, likely protecting
625 bleached colonies from excessive irradiation prior to recovery (Ravindran et al., 2013).
626 *Lawsonella* was another genus frequently associated with bleached corals here. Despite little
627 information exists on marine representatives, it could involve opportunistic/transient microbes,
628 as those described in certain human abscesses (Bell et al., 2016). Differentially abundant taxa
629 were broadly shared between Mcap and Pacu, and partially matching with Pcom –this last
630 chiefly influenced by *Endozoicomonas* spp. This outcome is appealing, and suggests that locally
631 the same players may modulate stress responses in different coral species. Thus, understanding
632 the dynamics of differentially abundant microbial consortia in correlation with bleaching and
633 recovery, could provide regional indicators to forecast the fate of sympatric corals to upcoming
634 (Glasl et al., 2017). Furthermore, certain strains could be proposed as “probiotics” to improve
635 coral resistance (Peixoto et al., 2017).

636

637

638 **5. Conclusions**

639

640 Prokaryotic and algal microbiomes differed among the three coral species. Despite the
641 recovery of the bleached individuals, there was no apparent pattern of temporal acclimatization.
642 Symbiodiniaceae shifts were found by bleaching phenotype in Mcap and Pcom, probably
643 contributing to resistance. Compared to previous work, ITS2-type profiling (Hume et al., 2019)
644 allowed us to disentangle higher intraspecific resolution within Symbiodiniaceae diversity.
645 Whilst compositional analyses (Morton et al., 2019) on the other, permitted the identification of
646 fine-scale differences in the abundance of certain ASVs/DIVs driving changes by bleaching
647 susceptibility and time within each host, despite overall stability of the communities. Fungal
648 associates remain unexplored, until better methods can address host co-amplification and
649 improve taxonomic identifications (Amend et al., 2012).

650 The three major coral reef founders in Kane’ohe Bay revealed different responses after
651 2014–2015 heatwaves. Pacu had thorough bleaching susceptibility and recovered
652 photosynthetic symbionts probably relying on heterotrophy (Lyndby et al., 2020; Dobson et al.,
653 2021), and microbiome rearrangements in the early recovery phases (Santos et al., 2014; Ziegler
654 et al., 2017). Mcap and Pcom displayed two bleaching phenotypes, and the susceptible colonies
655 Mcap_B revealed greater bleaching resistance and slower recovery at low biomass investment.
656 Instead, Pcom_B underwent stronger bleaching (higher pigment loss), faster symbiont
657 repopulation at higher metabolic expenses, but attained better energetic standing (Wall et al.,
658 2019; Ritson-Williams and Gates 2020).

659 It is difficult to forecast which of the three strategies will become successful in future
660 scenarios. Yet, after the recent 2019 heatwave in Hawai’i *P. compressa* demonstrated better
661 performance than *M. capitata*, suggesting certain acclimatization (Innis et al., 2018; Matsuda et
662 al., 2020). Similarly, poritid corals from Panamá predicted to be disadvantaged to upcoming

663 climate and anthropogenic disturbances with respect to other co-dominant scleractinians
664 (Aronson et al., 2014), have demonstrated unexpected resilience (O'Dea et al., 2020).
665 Cumulative research demonstrates that coral responses to thermal stress are reliant on host
666 species, geography, and severity/frequency of the events, impeding the elaboration of
667 generalizations. Notwithstanding this limitation, further understanding on microbial balances,
668 may allow to identify finer scale taxa dynamics as local indicators of coral reef fitness (Glasl et
669 al., 2017; Peixoto et al., 2017), serving as diagnostic tools for ecosystem stress.

670

671 **Appendix A. Supplementary data**

672 S1. Núñez-Pons et alii S1 SupplementaryMethods: Coral bleaching monitoring.
673 **Experimental co-variates:** **Table S1.** Experimental co-variates information. **Bioinformatics**
674 **analysis.** **Sequencing outputs:** **Table S2A.** Sequencing outputs of 16S rRNA gene V₄ reads.
675 **Table S2B.** Sequencing outputs of ITS1reads. **Table S2C.** Sequencing outputs of ITS2 reads.
676 **Rarefaction and sequencing depth:** **Table S3A.** Rarefaction information for 16S rRNA data,
677 **Table S3B.** Rarefaction information for ITS1 data, **Table S3C.** Rarefaction information for
678 ITS1 data.

679

680 S2. Núñez-Pons et alii S2 SupplementaryResults: Alpha diversity for 16s rRNA gene data.
681 **Fig. S1.** Alpha diversity. **Beta diversity for 16s rRNA gene data.** **Fig. S2.1.** RPCA
682 compositional biplot based on Aitchison distances for Mcap. **Fig. S2.2.** RPCA compositional
683 biplots based on Aitchison distances for Pcom. **Fig. S2.3.** RPCA compositional biplots based on
684 Aitchison distances for Pacu. **Taxa bar plots at ASV level.** **Fig. S.3.1.** Prokaryotic composition
685 at the ASV level for Mcap. **Fig. S.3.2.** Prokaryotic composition at the ASV level for Pcom. **Fig.**
686 **S.3.2.** Prokaryotic composition at the ASV level for Pacu. **Longitudinal approaches.**
687 **Longitudinal analyses for the 16S rRNA gene data.** **Fig S4.1.** Box plot of pairwise distances
688 on Jaccard index of 16S data. **Fig S4.2.** Box plot of pairwise distances on Bray Curtis beta index
689 of 16S data. **Fig S4.3.** Volatility plot on Bray Curtis distances of 16S data from one timepoint to

690 the consecutive. **Fig S4.4.** Volatility based on Bray Curtis distances of 16S data on coral
691 colonies from any time point respect to M0. **Fig S4.5.** Volatility plot of shared phylotypes of
692 16S data from any time point respect to M0. **Fig S4.6.** Volatility plot on log-ratio rakings of
693 microbial bacterial balances formed by differential taxa from one timepoint to the consecutive.
694 **Fig S4.7.** Volatility on log-ratio rakings of microbial bacterial balances formed by differential
695 taxa from any time point respect to Month 0. **Longitudinal analyses for the ITS2 data.** **Fig.**
696 **S4.8.** Volatility plots of first distances with DEICODE of ITS2 sequences from any time point
697 to Month 0. **Fig. S4.9.** Volatility plots of first distances with Bray Curtis from any time point to
698 Month 0 for ITS2 sequences. **Fig. 4.10.** Pairwise differences on LogRatios of balances formed
699 by differential ITS2 sequences in Pcom. **Fig. S4.11.** Pairwise differences on LogRatios of
700 balances formed by differentially abundant ITS2 sequences between Month 0 and 6. **Fig. 4.12**
701 Volatility plot of log-ratios ranks of balances formed by differential ITS2 sequences from corals
702 across time points M0–M6. **Longitudinal trajectories of differential bacterial taxa.** **Fig S5.**
703 Longitudinal trajectory plots of CLR of differential *Endozoicomonas* microbes in Pcom. **Fungal**
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808 **Data availability**

809 Sequencing data and associated metadata are available at National Center for
810 Biotechnology Information (NCBI, Genbank) under BioProject PRJNA791513 for 16S rRNA
811 gene, BioProject PRJNA794040 for ITS1, and BioProject PRJNA794042 for ITS2 data. Other
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813

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1162

1163 **Figure legends**

1164 **Fig. 1.** Map of Kane'ohe (O'ahu) in the Hawai'ian archipelago. Experimental coral sampling
1165 scheme from tagged corals in the field, where 1.5 cm fragments were collected for each colony
1166 in all sample groups (n = 10): Mcap_B, Mcap_NB, Pcom_B, Pcom_NB, and Pacu _B on five
1167 occasions during the recovery after the first beaching event: M0: Oct 2014; M1: Nov 2014; M3:
1168 Jan 2015, M6: May 2015, M12: Sept 2015. Species: Mcap: *Montipora capitata*, Pcom:s *Porites*
1169 *compressa*, Pacu: *Pocillopora acuta*. Bleaching susceptibility: B: susceptible colonies; NB:
1170 resistant colonies.

1171

1172 **Fig. 2.** Prokaryotic composition at the genus level (> 0.1 % detection) for the three coral
1173 species. Bars are collapsed by species, month after bleaching event and bleaching susceptibility
1174 phenotypes; and grouped for species and bleaching susceptibility. Species: Mcap: *Montipora*
1175 *capitata*, Pcom:s *Porites compressa*, Pacu: *Pocillopora acuta*. Bleaching susceptibility: B:
1176 susceptible colonies; NB: resistant colonies. Month after bleaching event: M0: Oct 2014; M1:
1177 Nov 2014; M3: Jan 2015, M6: May 2015, M12: Aug 2015 (Table S1).

1178

1179 **Fig. 3.** Volatility of the log-ratios of the microbial/bacterial balance representing the differential
1180 taxa across time for the three coral species, by bleaching susceptibility phenotypes.
1181 **A)** *Montipora capitata*; **B)** *Pocillopora acuta*; and **C)** *Porites compressa* corals. Numerator
1182 and denominator taxa forming each balance are shown in each plot grouped at the genus level,
1183 or the next lowest taxonomic annotation. *Represents time points with significant dissimilarities
1184 between B and NB colonies (Welch tests p < 0.05). §Indicates significant divergence on log-
1185 ratio longitudinally over time (LME; P>[z] < 0.05). **D)** Trajectory plots over time of
1186 differentially abundant bacterial taxa at the ASV level for the three coral species, by bleaching
1187 susceptibility phenotypes. Taxa are named by the lowest taxonomical annotation. Double
1188 dashed lines represent selected numerator taxa, while single dashed lines represent denominator
1189 taxa within each coral subset. Mcap: *Montipora capitata*, Pcom *Porites compressa*,
1190 Pacu: *Pocillopora acuta*; NB: Bleaching resistant colonies, B: Bleaching susceptible colonies;

1191 Months after the bleaching event: M0: Oct 2014; M1: Nov 2014; M3: Jan 2015, M6: May 2015,
1192 M12: Sept 2015.

1193

1194 **Fig. 4.** Symbiodiniaceae community composition of the three coral species across time points –
1195 0 (M0), 1 (M1), 3 (M3) and 6 (M6) months after the bleaching event, and bleaching
1196 susceptibility phenotypes –Bleaching susceptible (B) and resistant (NB) colonies. Each column
1197 represents a coral fragment/sample at each collection point. Microalgal IDs are depicted by the
1198 relative abundance of ITS2 sequences (> 3 % detection) plotted in the upper bars, and predicted
1199 ITS2 profiles plotted in the bars below (normalized to 1). **A)** *Montipora capitata* (Mcap); **B)**
1200 *Porites compressa* (Pcom) ; **C)** *Pocillopora acuta* (Pacu).

1201

1202 **Fig. 5.** Volatility of the log-ratios of the balance formed by the ITS2 sequences representing the
1203 top differential phylotypes in two coral species by bleaching susceptibility phenotypes across
1204 time. **A)** *Montipora capitata*: The balance included 23 top ranked numerator DIVs comprising
1205 some C31, C17 and C21 and other C DIVs; and 23 top ranked denominator DIVs, formed by
1206 D4, D1, D6, D1ab and D3h, and a few C17 and C21 among other C DIVs. **B)** *Porites*
1207 *compressa*: In the balance 12 top ranked numerator DIVs included C3 and other C DIVs; and
1208 the 12 top ranked denominator DIVs comprised several C15 and other C DIVs. *Represents
1209 time points with significant dissimilarities between B and NB colonies (Welch tests $p < 0.05$).

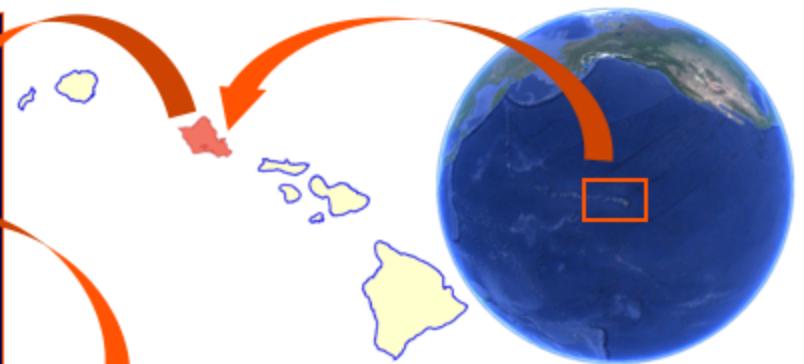
1210 RPCA compositional biplot based on Aitchison distances (DEICODE) of the
1211 total Symbiodiniaceae ITS2 sequences from coral fragments belonging to two species at four
1212 time points –0 (M0), 1 (M1), 3 (M3) and 6 (M6) months after the bleaching event. Samples
1213 (circles) were distinguished by colour according to Bleaching susceptibility.

1214 **C)** *Montipora capitata* (Mcap) showed differences in B vs NB colonies at M0, M1 and M3. **D)**
1215 *Porites compressa* (Pcom) revealed divergencies in B vs NB colonies only at t0
1216 (PERMANOVA, $p < 0.05$). Ten most relevant DIVs driving differences in the ordination space
1217 are illustrated by the vectors in each plot.

1218

1219 **Fig. 6.** Cross co-occurrence networks of bacteria phylotypes at the ASV level vs ITS2 type
1220 profiles built on SCNIC for the three coral species, by bleaching susceptibility phenotypes 0
1221 (Oct 2014 –M0), 1 (Nov 2014 –M1), 3 (Jan 2015 –M3) and 6 (May 2015 –M6) months after the
1222 bleaching event. Mcap: *Montipora capitata*, Pcom *Porites compressa*, Pacu: *Pocillopora acuta*;
1223 B: Bleaching susceptible colonies, NB: Bleaching resistant colonies. In the networks bacterial
1224 ASVs are represented by pink hexagons, Symbiodiniaceae type profiles of
1225 the *Cladocopium* clade are green circles and *Durusdinium* are orange circles. Negative
1226 interactions are depicted by red arrows and quantified as red numbers / positive interactions by
1227 green arrows and green numbers.

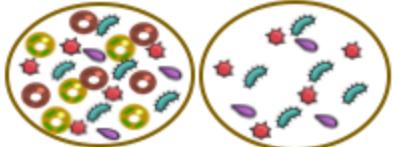
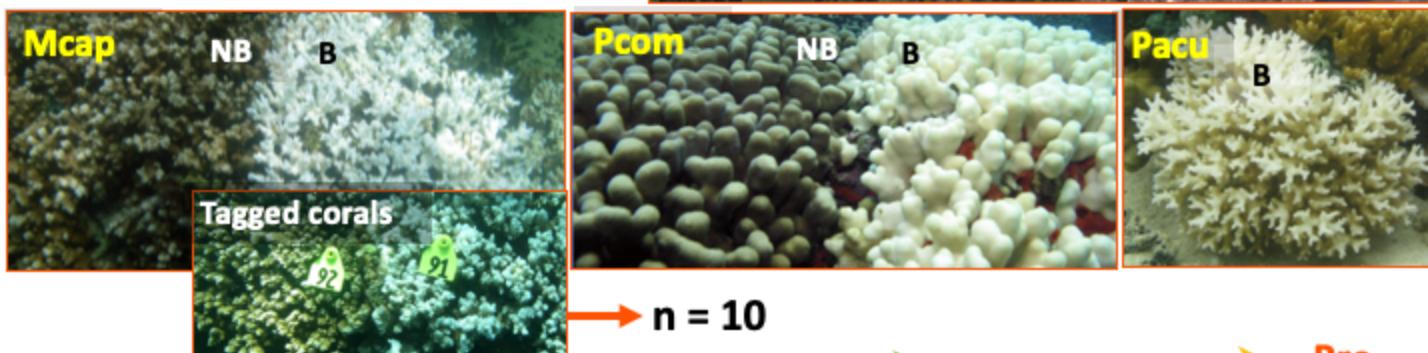
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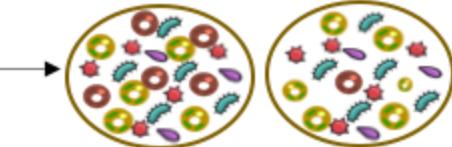
Kane'ohe Bay, Oahu
(Hawai'i)

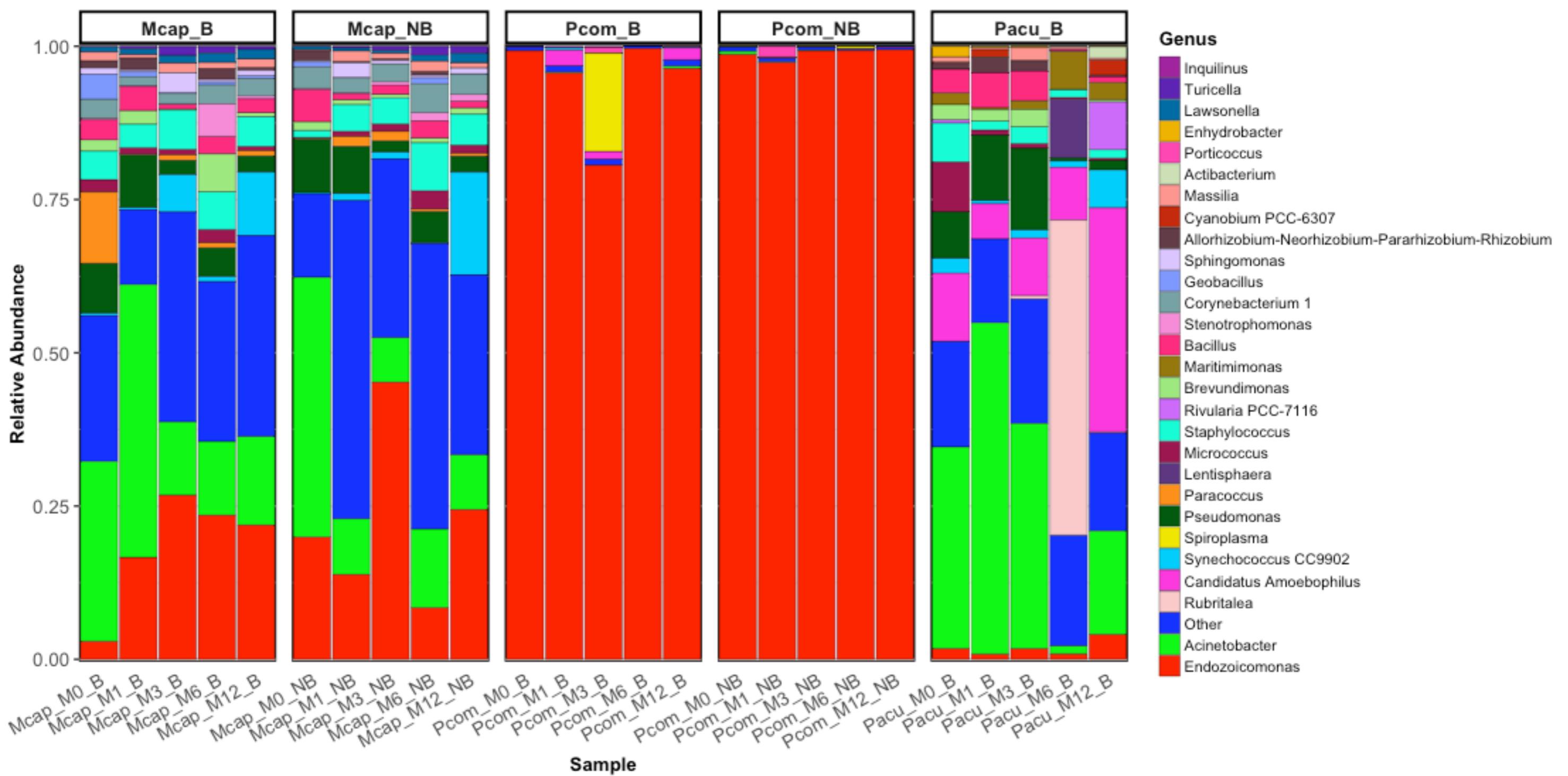


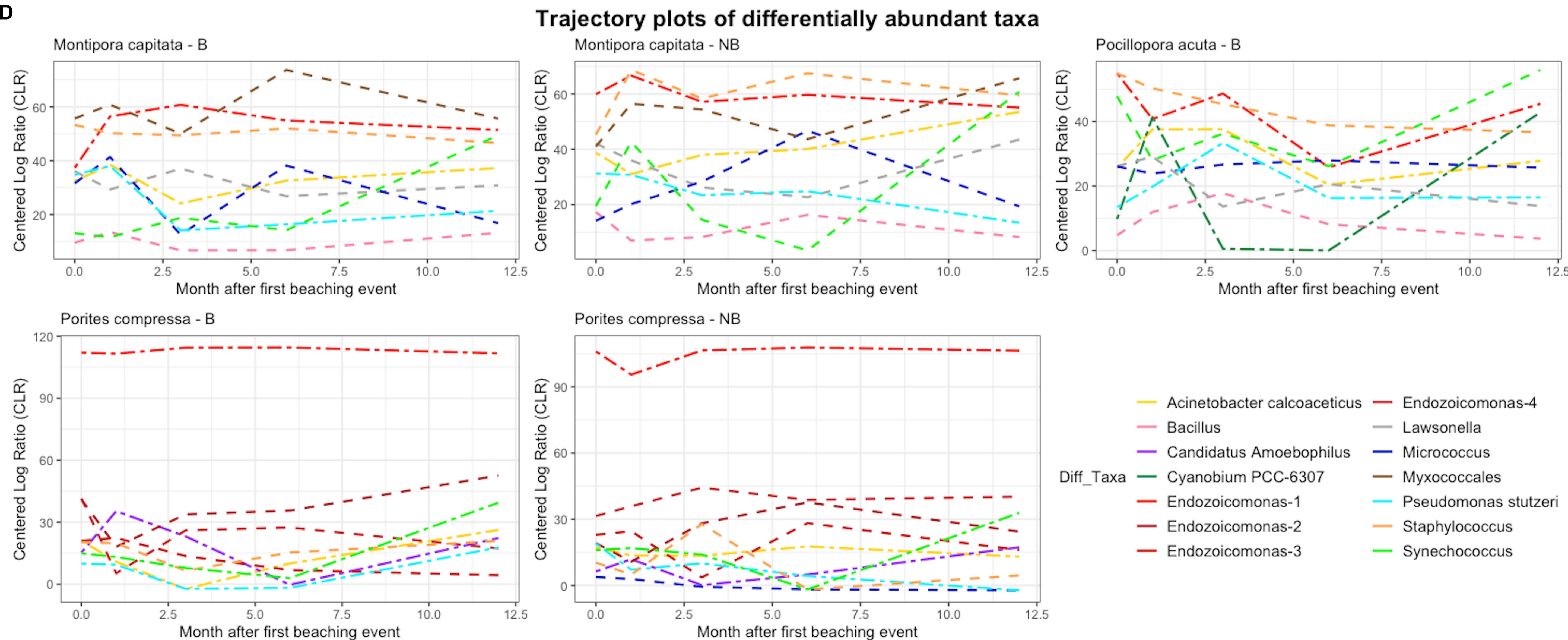
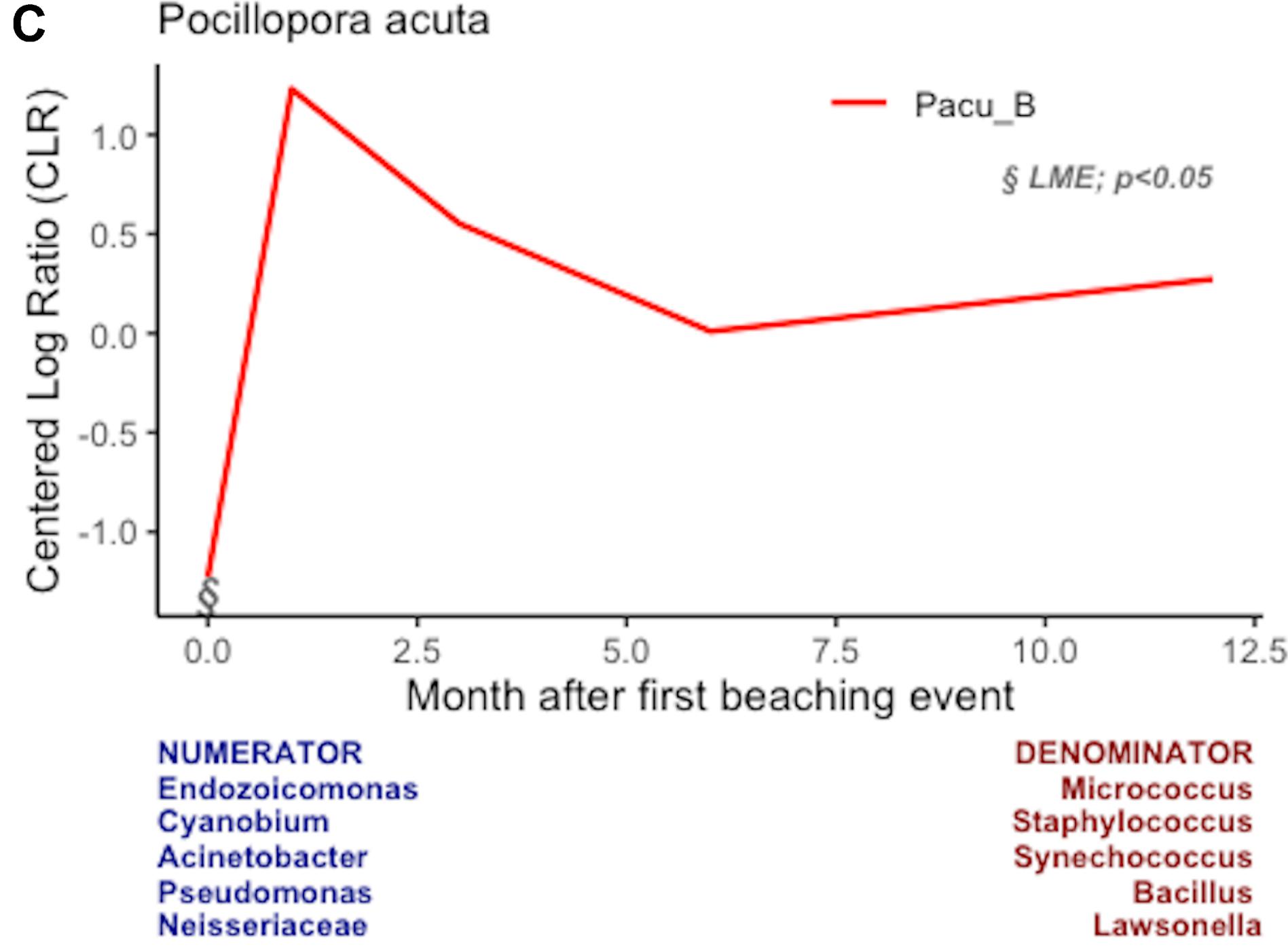
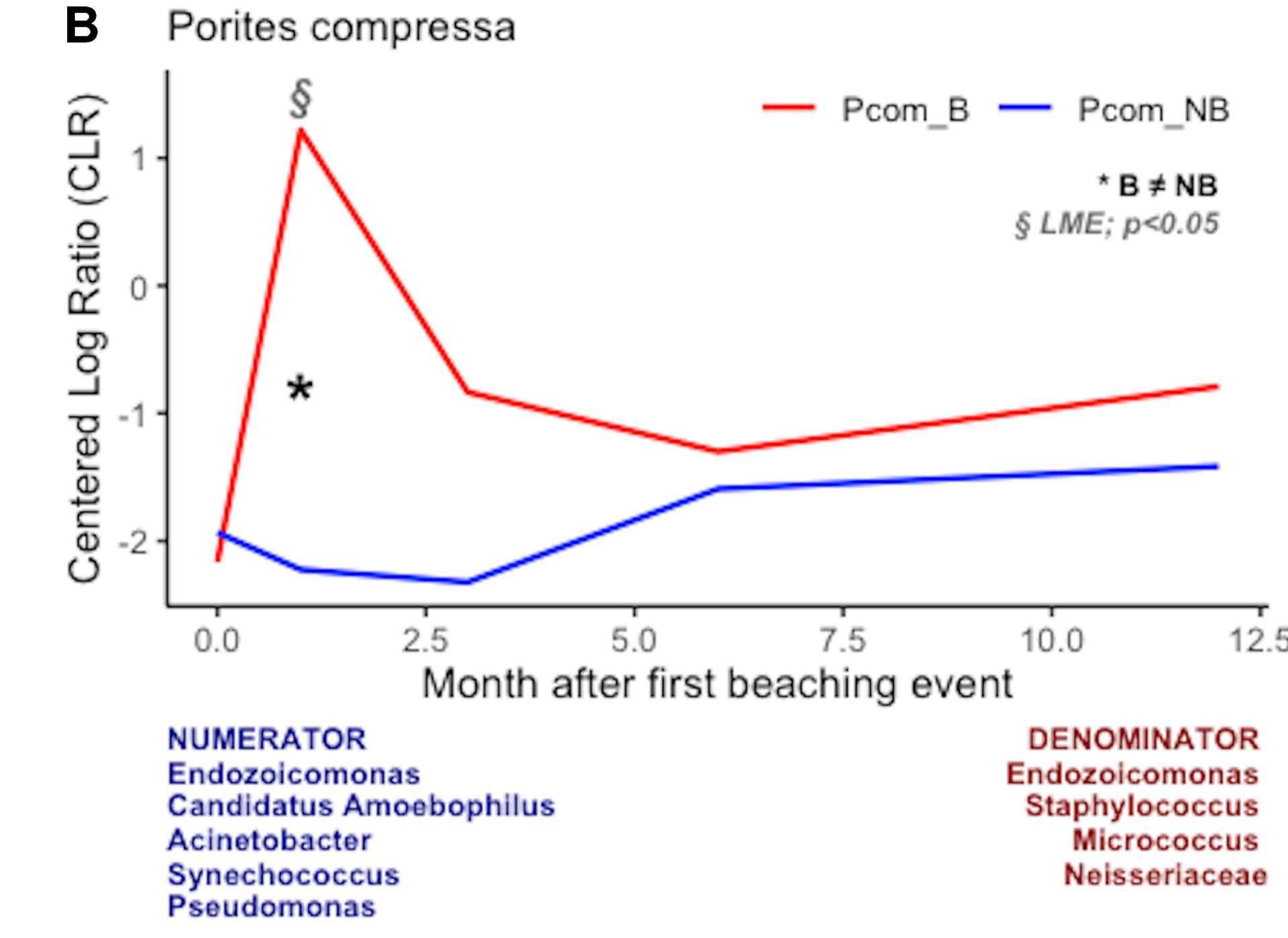
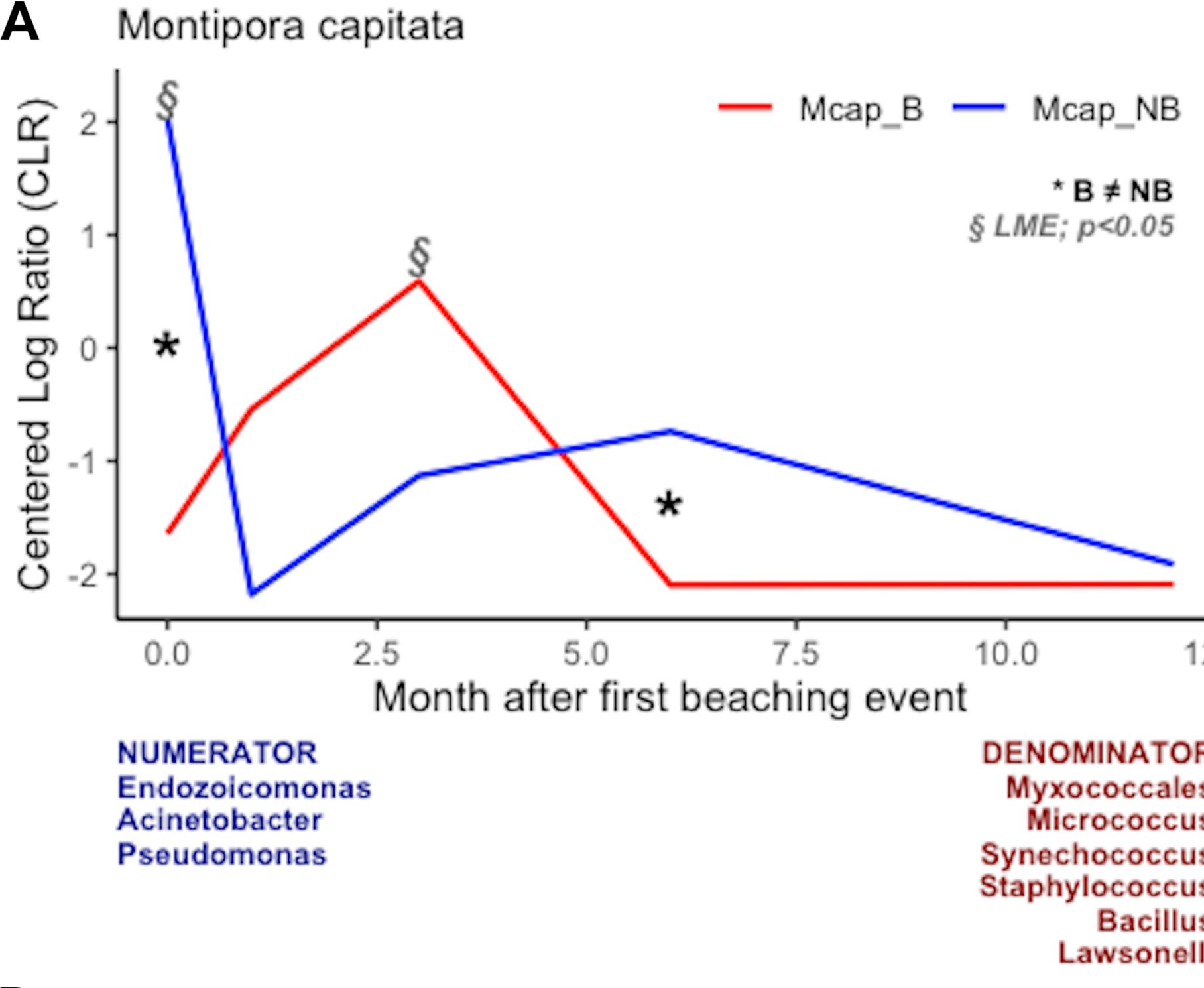
Coral bleaching Oct 2014

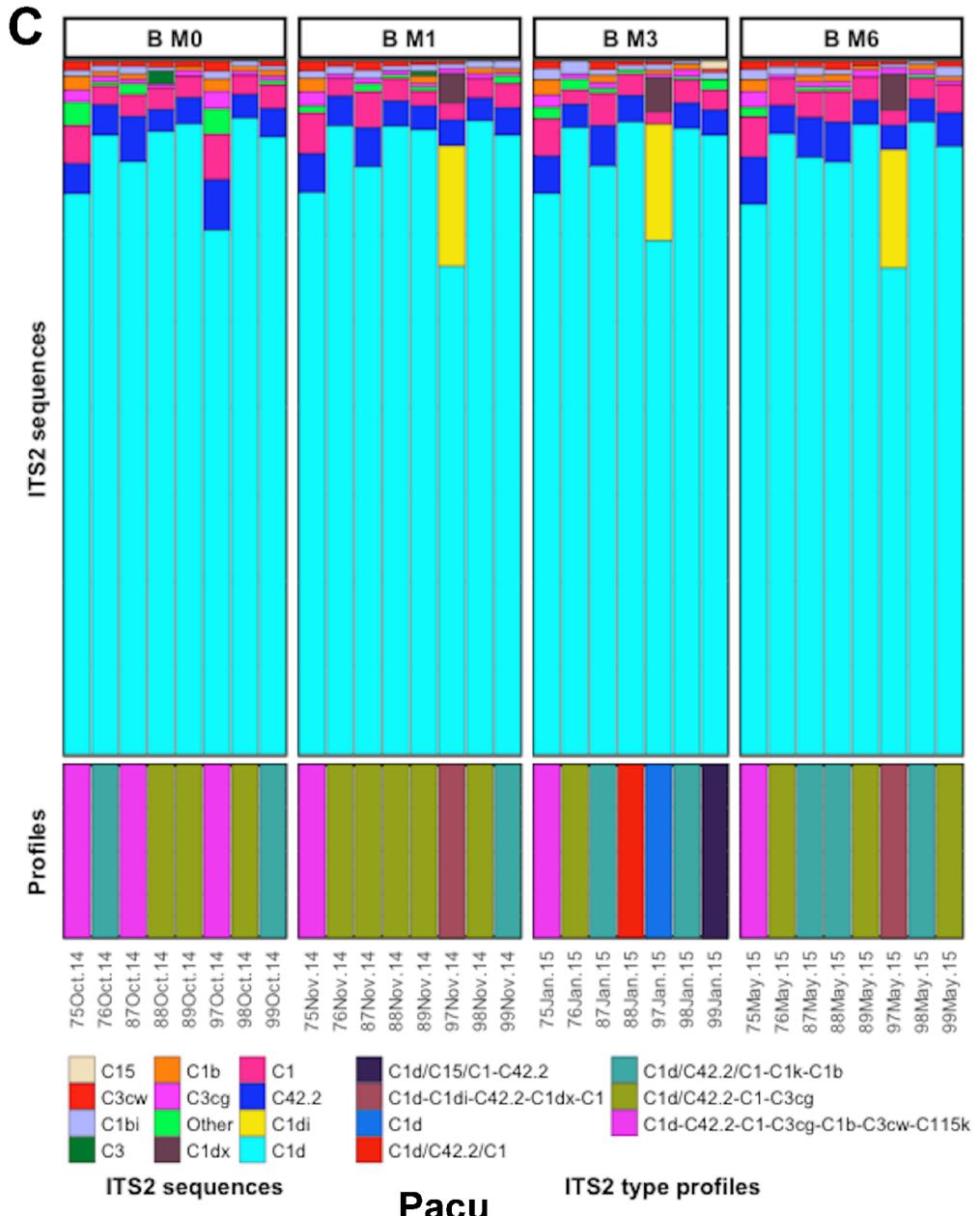
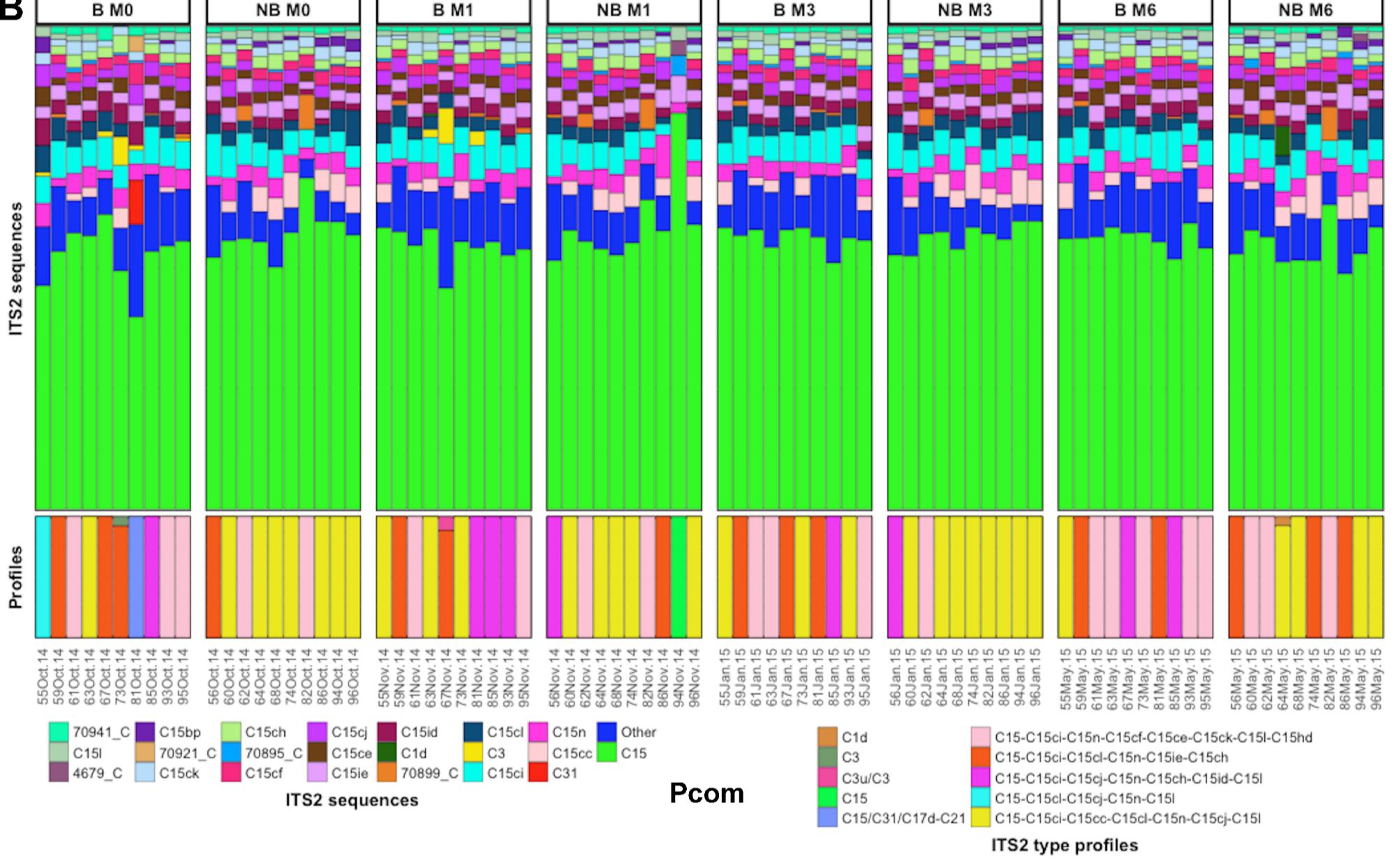
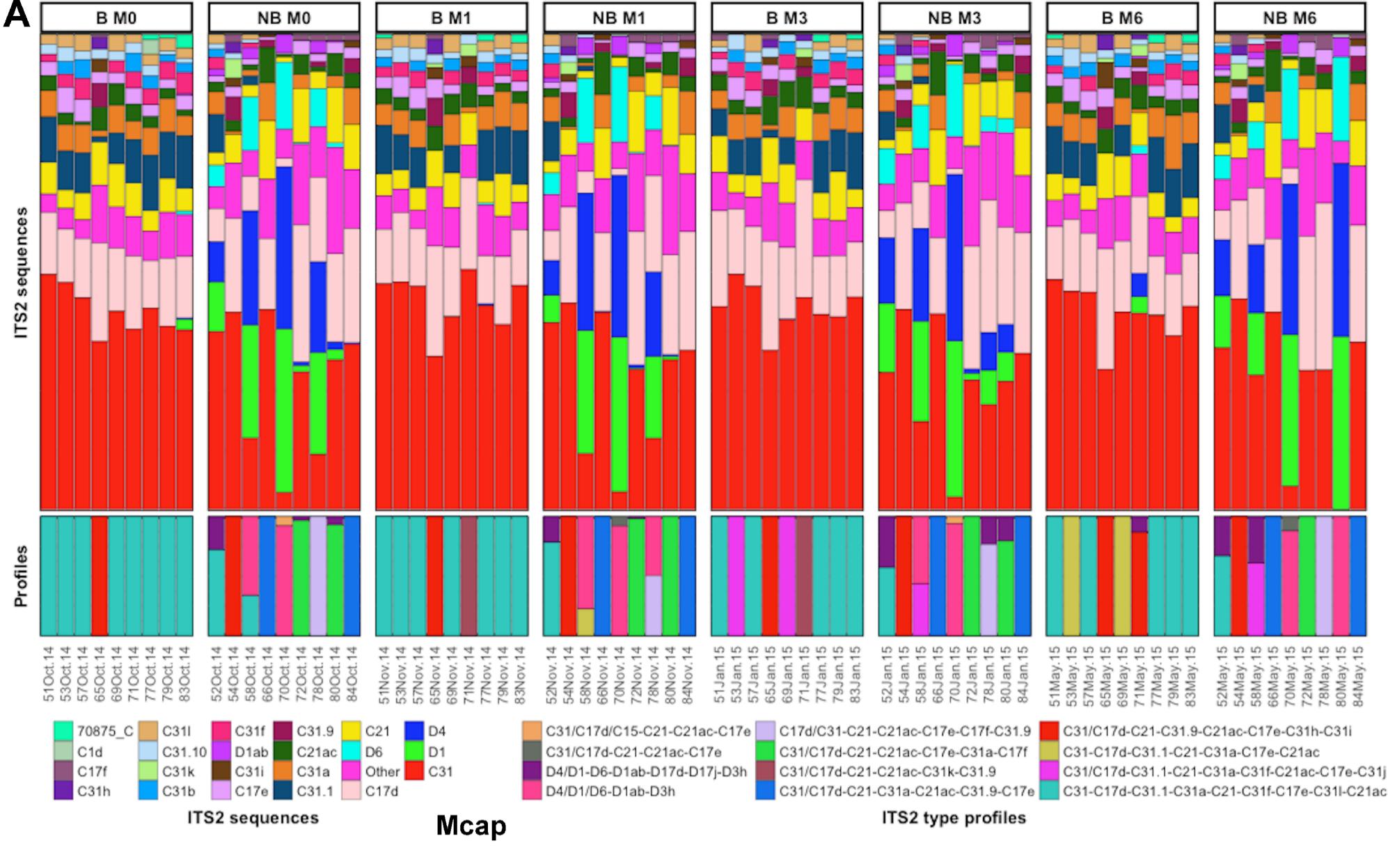


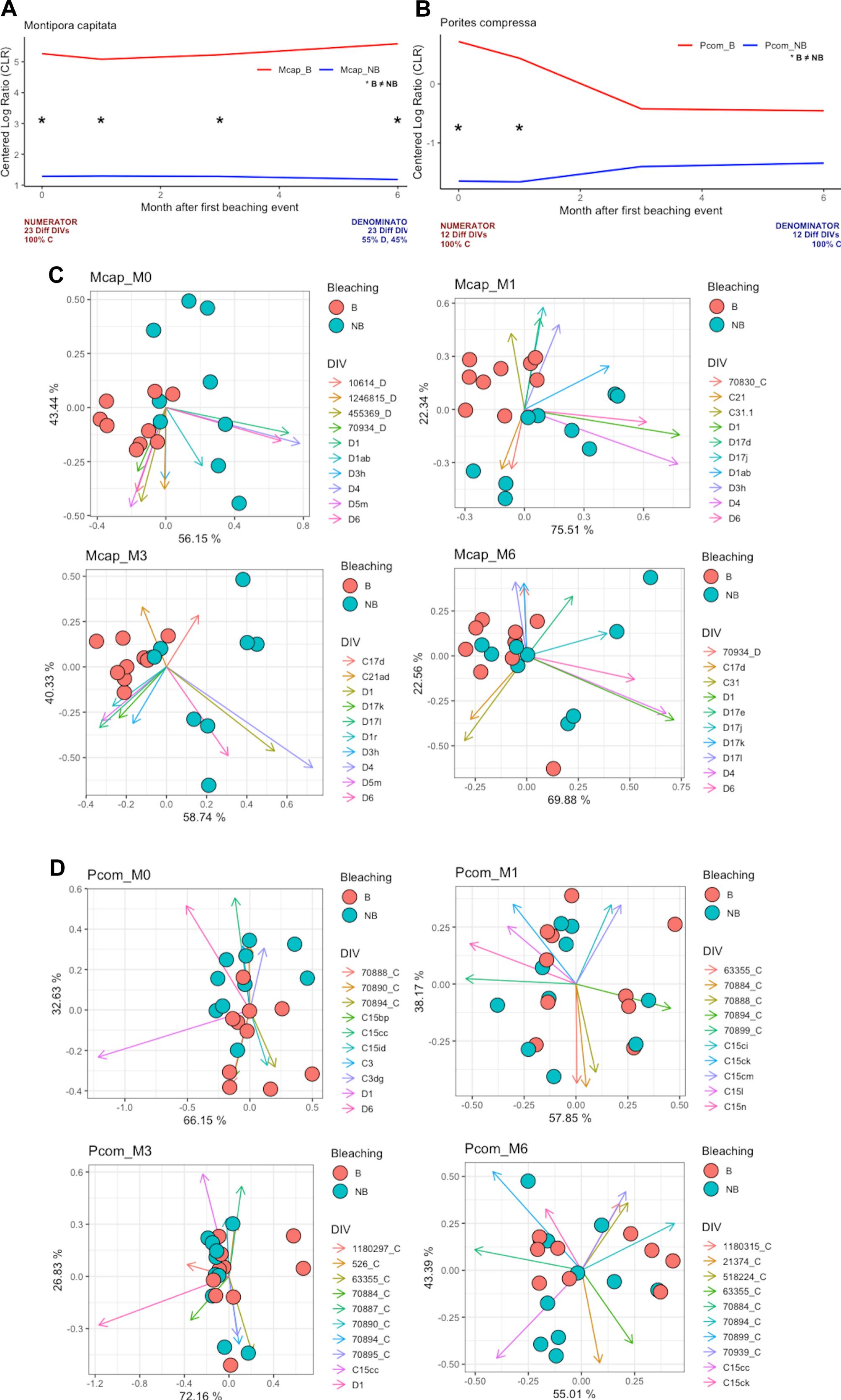
Coral
microbiomes

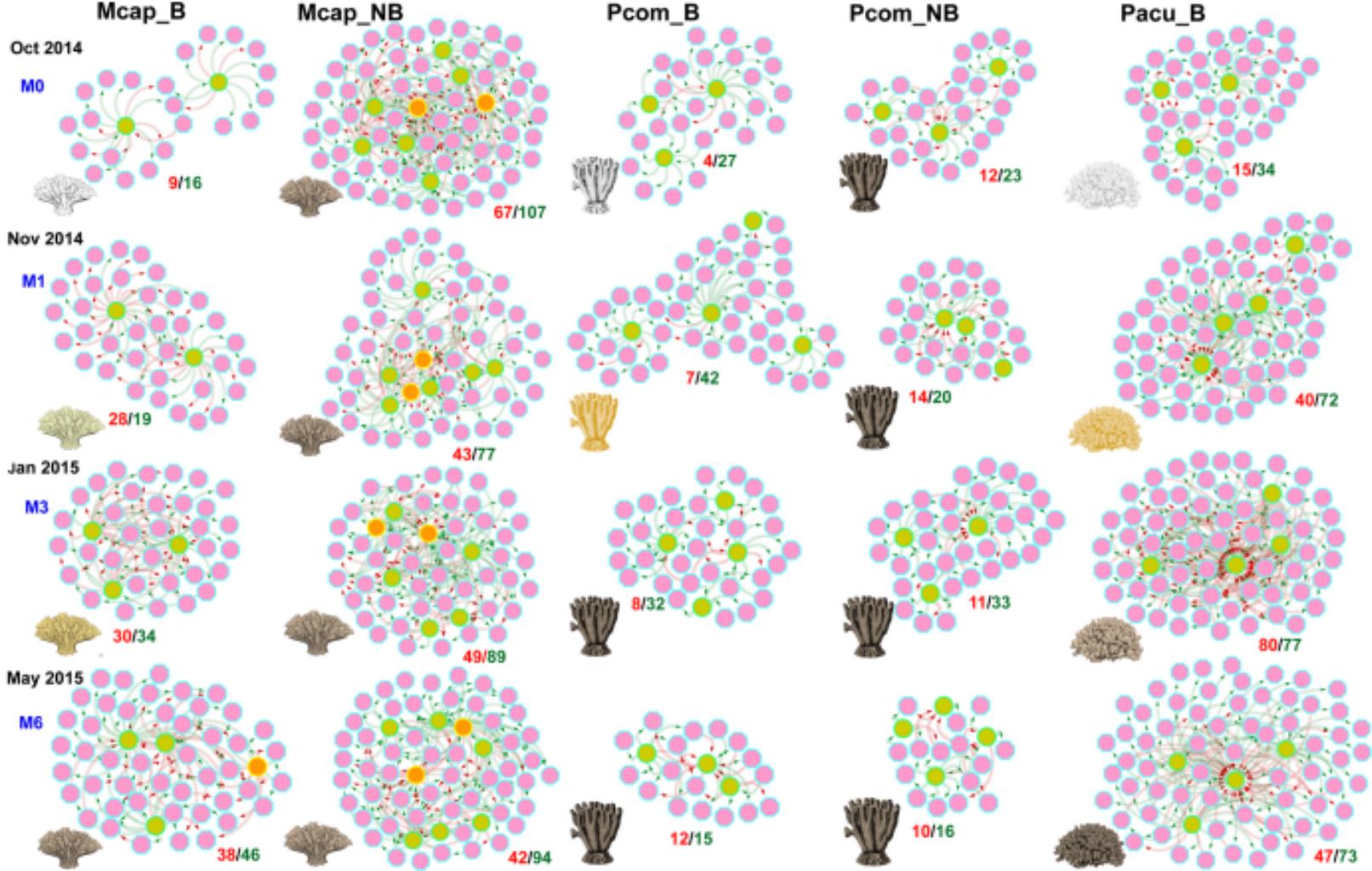








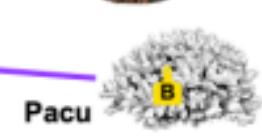
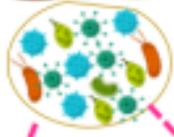
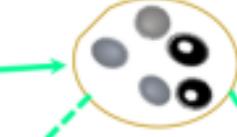
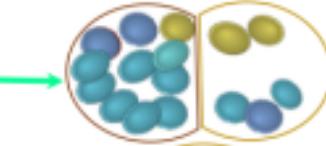
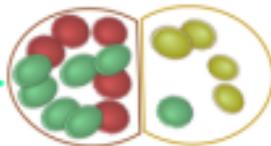
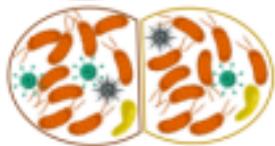
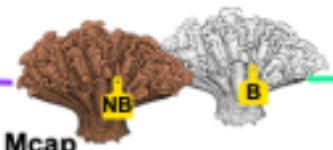




Prokaryota

Kane'ohe Bay, Oahu (Hawai'i)

Symbiodiniaceae



Host
specificity

Intraspecific
variability

Bleaching
susceptibility
phenotypes

Common interspecific microbial consortia
modulate thermal stress responses

