

The Use of Diatoms as Palaeoenvironmental Indicators in Botswana: A Review and Species Checklist

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Abstract

The identification and counting of diatoms in fluvial and lacustrine sediments is an important technique in the reconstruction of past environments, allowing the identification of water depth, pH, salinity, temperature and turbidity. A number of studies have been carried out in northern Botswana over the past 30 years on the Okavango Delta and its associated palaeolakes, suggesting, on the basis of species associations, the presence of three major diatom ecosystems – the acidic Okavango Delta, the neutral to slightly saline major lakes, and saline ephemeral lakes and pans. This paper reviews the Botswana studies and presents a check list of diatoms found in Botswana at the genus, or where possible, species level as an aid to future research.