

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

CATALOG DOCUMENTATION  
MAIA-ESTUARIES SUMMARY DATABASE  
1997 and 1998 STATIONS  
SEDIMENT CHARACTERISTICS DATA: "SEDGRAIN"

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**1. DATASET IDENTIFICATION**

1.1 Title of Catalog document

MAIA-Estuaries Summary Database  
1997 and 1998 Stations  
Sediment Characteristics Data

1.2 Authors of the Catalog entry

John Kiddon, U.S. EPA NHEERL-AED  
Harry Buffum, OAO Corp.

1.3 Catalog revision date

April 30, 2000

1.4 Dataset name

SEDGRAIN

1.5 Task Group

MAIA Estuaries

1.6 Dataset identification code

005

1.7 Version

001

1.8 Request for Acknowledgment

EMAP requests that all individuals who download EMAP data acknowledge the source of these data in any reports, papers, or presentations. If you publish these data, please include a statement similar to: "Some or all of the data described in this article were produced by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency through its Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program (EMAP)".

## 2. INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION (for full addresses see Section 13)

### 2.1 Principal Investigators

John Paul, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NHEERL-Atlantic Ecology Division (AED)  
Charles Strobel, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NHEERL-Atlantic Ecology Division (AED)

### 2.2 Sample Collection Investigators

Charles Strobel, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NHEERL-Atlantic Ecology Division (AED)  
John Macauley, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Gulf Ecology Division (GED)  
Jeffrey L. Hyland, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Admin.-Carolinian Province (NOAA-DB)  
Michelle Harmon, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Admin.-Delaware Bay (NOAA-DB)  
Carl Zimmerman, National Park Service (NPS)  
Dan Dauer, Chesapeake Bay Program, Old Dominion University (CBP-ODU)  
J. Ananda Ranasinghe, Chesapeake Bay Program, Versar, Inc. (CBP-VER)

### 2.3 Sample Processing Investigators

J. Ananda Ranasinghe, Chesapeake Bay Program, Versar, Inc. (CBP-VER)  
Terry L. Wade, GERG, Texas A&M  
Courtney T. Hackney, University of North Carolina at Wilmington

## 3. DATASET ABSTRACT

### 3.1 Abstract of the Dataset

The SEDGRAIN data file reports the grain size, total organic carbon (TOC), and moisture content of sediments collected in MAIA estuaries during the Summers of 1997 and 1998. Grain size is reported as percent silt/clay or percent sand, representing particles that are less than 63 microns or greater than 63 microns, respectively. One record is presented for each sampling event. These measurements were performed on the same sediment samples used to measure the chemical and toxicological properties of the sediments, and are therefore complementary to the data contained in SEDCHEM and TOXICITY files.

### 3.2 Keywords for the Dataset

Percent sand, silt-clay, estuarine sediment composition, TOC, total organic carbon, percent moisture

## 4. OBJECTIVES AND INTRODUCTION

### 4.1 Program Objective

The main objectives of the MAIA-Estuaries program are: (1) to evaluate the ecological condition of the Mid-Atlantic estuaries by measuring key properties of the water, sediment, and the community of organisms; (2) to focus attention on small estuaries in order to develop better monitoring approaches for these critical systems; and (3) to develop partnerships among federal and state environmental organizations.

The Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program (EMAP) is an EPA research and monitoring program designed to provide unbiased assessments of the condition of selected resources over a wide region. A key feature of the program is a probabilistic sampling strategy that randomly selects sampling sites and assigns weighting factors based on area to all measured results. EMAP's strategy was adopted by the Mid-Atlantic Integrated Assessment (MAIA) program, which was designed to assess the conditions of the estuaries, forests, streams and lakes, and agricultural lands in the eight-state Mid-Atlantic region. This file contains data measured in MAIA estuaries during the Summers of 1997 and 1998. Samples were collected for water and sediment

analyses primarily in 1997, with a few additional sites sampled in 1998. Fish samples were collected only in 1998. Several estuaries were designated as intensive sites and were sampled in greater detail (see STATIONS file).

The partners in MAIA-Estuaries program are: (1) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), including both the Atlantic Ecology Division (AED) and the Gulf Ecology Division (GED); (2) National Park Service (NPS) under their project "Maryland Coastal Bays Monitoring"; (3) National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) which conducted sampling both in the Delaware Bay (DB) under their "National Status and Trends Program" and in the Carolinian Province (CP); and (4) The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP), which is a consortium of federal, state, and local governments and nongovernmental organizations. Each partner was responsible for collecting, processing, and reviewing data. The USEPA Atlantic Ecology Division was responsible for final assembly and review of all data. Laboratories contracted to process samples are specified by the parameter LABCODE included in all data files (Section 4.4). Details regarding use of partner and LABCODE information are presented in the EVENTS metadata file.

#### 4.2 Dataset Objective

The objective of the SEDGRAIN data file is to report the grain size of benthic sediment samples, total organic carbon (TOC), and moisture concentrations in the sediments. These measurements complement the measurements of chemical contaminants and toxicity performed on the same sediment samples.

#### 4.3 Dataset Background Discussion

The grain size, moisture content, and total organic carbon content of sediments are properties that may affect the sediment's ability to bind chemical contaminants. The SEDGRAIN data were measured on the same grabs used to measure chemical and toxicological properties of the sediments, and can therefore be used to help interpret those results.

Notes: (1) The grain-size parameters are labeled SAND and SILTCLAY because of the strong correlation between size and composition. Particles larger than 63 microns are defined to be sand, while particles smaller than 63 microns are considered to be silt-clay; however, the mineralogical composition of the sediment particles was not analyzed directly.

(2) There are two measures of sediment grain size reported in the MAIA-Estuaries database: BENGRAIN and SEDGRAIN. The SEDGRAIN values were measured on grabs specifically collected to measure chemical and toxicological properties. The BENGRAIN values were measured using sediment grabs which were collected to characterize the community structure of organisms in the benthos. The following difference in the two sampling protocols should be noted. Sediments used in the BENGRAIN measurements were obtained from undisturbed subsamples of each benthic grab, whereas the sediments used in the SEDGRAIN measurements were taken from a homogenate of the upper two centimeters of several grab samples. The two measures appear to be comparable (see Section 9.3),

#### 4.4 Summary of Dataset Parameters

*STATION	Station name
*EVNTDATE	Event date
SAND	Grain size of sediment particles, reported as the percent of sediment dry weight that is composed of particles <i>larger</i> than 63 microns.
SILTCLAY	Grain size of sediment particles, reported as the percent of sediment dry weight that is composed of particles <i>smaller</i> than 63 microns.
MOISTURE	Moisture content in sediment sample (%).
TOC	Total organic carbon content in sediment sample (%).

#### 4.4 Summary of Dataset Parameters, cont.

LABCODE	A code identifying the contractors responsible for processing samples:
GRN-1	USEPA contractor: TAMU/GERG
GRN-2	NOAA (CP): University of North Carolina at Wilmington
GRN-4	NOAA (DB) contractor:
QACODE	Quality assurance/quality control codes (see Section 5.1.12)
<blank>	No qualification
GRN-A	Grain size not measured
YEAR	Year of sample collection: 1997 or 1998

\* denotes parameters that should be used as key fields when merging data files

### 5. DATA ACQUISITION AND PROCESSING METHODS

#### 5.1 Data Acquisition / Field Sampling

The sample collection methods used by USEPA field crews are described here. Significant variations by other MAIA partners are noted in Section 5.1.12. Details regarding MAIA partners are reported in the EVENTS data file.

##### 5.1.1 Sampling Objective

Sediment sub-samples were collected for the measurement of grain size, moisture content, and total organic carbon content. The sub-samples were prepared from a homogenate of the upper two-centimeters of sediment grabs. The remaining portions of the grabs were used for chemical and toxicological analysis.

##### 5.1.2 Sample Collection: Methods Summary

Multiple sediment grabs were collected from each site using a Young-modified Van Veen grab sampler. The primary purpose of these grabs was to characterize the chemical and toxicological properties of the sediment. Each grab was nominally 440 cm<sup>2</sup> in area and up to 10 cm in depth, but only the top two-centimeter layer of a grab was retained for the analyses described here. A sufficient number of grabs were processed to provide three liters of sediment. The sediment composite was homogenized and separated into two fractions for storage until analysis. One fraction was frozen and used in the analysis of TOC, percent moisture and the measurement of the chemical contaminants. The second fraction was chilled but never frozen during storage, and was used for grain-size and toxicity analyses.

##### 5.1.3 Beginning Sampling Dates

8 July 1997  
13 July 1998

##### 5.1.4 Ending Sampling Dates

8 October 1997  
8 October 1998

##### 5.1.5 Sampling Platform

Samples were collected from gasoline or diesel powered boats 18 to 133 feet in length.

##### 5.1.6 Sampling Equipment

A 1/25 m<sup>2</sup>, stainless steel (coated with Kynar), Young-modified Van Veen grab sampler was used to collect sediments.

#### 5.1.7 Manufacturer of Sampling Equipment

Young's Welding, Sandwich, MA

#### 5.1.8 Key Variables

Not applicable

#### 5.1.9 Sample Collection: Collection

The sampling gear does not require any calibration, although it was inspected regularly for damage by mishandling or impact on rocky substrates.

#### 5.1.10 Sample Collection: Quality Control

Care was taken to minimize disturbance to the sediment grabs. Grabs that were incomplete, slumped, less than 7 cm in depth, or comprised chiefly of shelly substrates were discarded. The chance of sampling the same location was minimized by repositioning the boat five meters downstream after three sampling attempts. The repeatability of the sampling procedure was assessed both by evaluating the precision of any replicate SEDGRAIN measurements performed at a station, and also by comparing BENGRAIN and SEDGRAIN values when both parameters were measured at the same station. Details on these comparisons are contained in Section 9.3.

#### 5.1.11 Sample Collection: References

Strobel, C.J. 1998. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program - Mid-Atlantic Integrated Assessment. Estuaries Component, Field Operations and Safety Manual. U.S. EPA, Office of Research and Development, NHEERL-AED, Narragansett, RI. July 1998.

Kokkinakis, S.A., J.L. Hyland, and A. Robertson. 1994. Carolinian Demonstration Project - 1994 Field Operations Manual. Joint National Status and Trends/Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program. NOAA/NOS/ORCA, Silver Spring, MD.

#### 5.1.12 Sample Collection: Alternate Methods

Not applicable

### 5.2 Data Preparation and Sample Processing

The processing methods used by USEPA contracts will be described here (LABCODE = GRN-1). Any significant variations by other MAIA partners are noted in Section 5.2.6.

#### 5.2.1 Sample Processing Objective

Sediment samples were analyzed to measure the sediment grain size. The grain size is reported as either smaller than or larger than 63 microns. The percent total organic carbon (TOC) and percent moisture of the sediments were also measured.

#### 5.2.2 Sample Processing: Methods Summary

For the grain size analysis, sediments were homogenized and diluted to a suspended slurry with the aid of chemical dispersant, and the suspension passed through a 63 micron sieve. The fine fraction passing through the sieve (<63 micron) and the coarse fraction retained on the filter (>63 micron) were separately dried and weighed. A small correction to the weight was applied to account for the salt and dispersant residue remaining after evaporation. SILTCLAY was calculated as the salt-free weight of the fine fraction divided by the combined fine plus coarse salt-free weights (the result expressed as a percentage). SAND was calculated as 100% minus SILTCLAY. See USEPA, 1995 for details. For the moisture analysis, the sediments were homogenized and dried, and percent moisture was calculated from the loss in weight after correcting for salt remaining after evaporation. For the percent total organic carbon (TOC) analysis, sediment samples were acidified by immersion in 10% HCl to remove inorganic carbonate materials. The dried sediments were oxidized in a muffle furnace at 950 °C in pure O<sub>2</sub>. The evolved CO<sub>2</sub> gas was integrated, compared to standard curves, and reported as percent organic carbon based on dry weight.

5.2.3 Sample Processing: Calibration

The apparatus for TOC measurements was calibrated by combusting standard reference materials, in accordance with standard laboratory procedures.

5.2.4 Sample Processing: Quality Control

Duplicate analyses were performed on 10% of the samples (5% for TOC measurements). Blank and spiked analyses were also performed with each batch of samples. All QC analyses agreed to within about 3%, exceeding QA/QC objectives of agreement to within 10% (Valente and Strobel, 1993).

5.2.5 Sample Processing: References

U.S. EPA. 1995. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program (EMAP): Laboratory Methods Manual-Estuaries, Volume 1: Biological and Physical Analyses. Narragansett (RI): U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, EPA/620/R-95/008.

Texas A & M University, Geochemical and Environmental Research Group. 1990. NOAA Status and Trends, Mussel Watch Program, Analytical Methods. Submitted to NOAA. Rockville (MD): U.S. Dept. of Commerce, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, Ocean Assessment Division.

5.2.6 Sample Processing: Alternate Methods

Consult the EVENTS data file for PARTNER information. Samples collected by PARTNER = VERSAR were not analyzed for grain size, but moisture and TOC values were measured. These records are designated with QACODE = GRN-A. The best approximation for the missing sediment grain-size values are reported in the BENGRAIN data file (refer to Sections 4.3 and 9.3).

Samples collected in 1998 by PARTNER = NPS or AED (eastern bays excepted) were not analyzed for moisture and TOC.

Samples processed by the NOAA (DB) contractor (LABCODE = GRN-4) were not analyzed for moisture.

**6. DATA ANALYSIS AND MANIPULATIONS**

6.1 Name of New or Modified Values

Not applicable

6.2 Description of Data Manipulation

Not applicable

**7. DATA DESCRIPTION**

7.1 Description of Parameters

7.1.1 Components of the Dataset

PARAMETER	TYPE	LENGTH	LABEL
STATION	Char	10	Station Name
EVNTDATE	Num	8	Event Date
SAND	Num	8	Sand Content (%)
SILTCLAY	Num	8	Silt-clay Content (%)
MOISTURE	Num	8	Moisture Content (%)

7.1.1 Components of the Dataset, cont.

TOC	Num	8	Total Organic Carbon (%)
LABCODE	Char	5	Laboratory Code
QACODE	Char	5	QA Code
YEAR	Num	4	Year of Sampling

7.1.2 Precision of Reported Values

SAND, SILTCLAY, MOISTURE and TOC are reported as percentages to 0.01%. Values are reliable to no more than three significant digits; however more significant digits may be reported in the dataset because of formatting restrictions.

7.1.3 Minimum Value in Dataset

SAND	0.47%
SILTCLAY	0.00%
MOISTURE	16.3%
TOC	0.03%

7.1.4 Maximum Value in Dataset

SAND	100%
SILTCLAY	99.5%
MOISTURE	91.5%
TOC	13.7%

7.2 Data Record Example

7.2.1 Column Names for Example Records

STATION	EVNTDATE	SAND	SILTCLAY	MOISTURE	TOC	LABCODE	QACODE	YEAR
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7.2.2 Example Data Records

STATION	EVNTDATE	SAND	SILTCLAY	MOISTURE	TOC	LABCODE	QACODE	YEAR
MA97-0001	08/25/97	83.55	16.45	33.40	0.69	GRN-1		1997
MA97-0003	08/26/97	96.76	3.24	25.20	0.13	GRN-1		1997
MA97-0004	08/26/97	2.30	97.70	66.73	2.66	GRN-1		1997

**8. GEOGRAPHIC AND SPATIAL INFORMATION**

8.1 Minimum Longitude (Westernmost)

-77.4339 decimal degrees

8.2 Maximum Longitude (Easternmost)

-74.7230 decimal degrees

8.3 Minimum Latitude (Southernmost)

34.8702 decimal degrees

8.4 Maximum Latitude (Northernmost)

40.1470 decimal degrees

8.5 Name of Region

MAIA estuary region, consisting of Delaware Bay, Chesapeake Bay, the Delmarva coastal bays, Albemarle-Pamlico Sound, and contiguous estuaries

## 9. QUALITY CONTROL AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

### 9.1 Measurement Quality Objectives

Measure replicate grain size of samples to within a precision of 10% (see Valente and Strobel, 1993).

### 9.2 Data Quality Assurance Procedures

Two QA checks were performed to evaluate the reliability of the reported SAND and SILTCLAY data. The first involved calculating the precision of all analysis performed on replicate BENGRAIN grabs taken at a station (typically three grabs per station). The second test involved calculating the median difference between BENGRAIN and SEDGRAIN analyses for stations where both parameters were measured.

### 9.3 Actual Measurement Quality

Since SAND and SILTCLAY values are complementary, only statistics for SAND are considered. The standard deviation of all available replicate analysis was 3.1%. The median difference between BENGRAIN and SEDGRAIN analyses for stations where both parameters were measured was 2.7%. Both of these QA checks suggest that BENGRAIN measurements are generally reliable to within a few percentage units, *i.e.*, relatively good precision.

## 10. DATA ACCESS

### 10.1 Data Access Procedures

Data can be downloaded from the web

### 10.2 Data Access Restrictions

None

### 10.3 Data Access Contact Persons

John Paul, Principal Investigator  
U.S. EPA NHEERL-AED  
401-782-3037, 401-782-3099 (FAX), paul.john@epa.gov

Harry Buffum, Data Manager/ MAIA-Estuaries  
U.S. EPA NHEERL-AED  
401-782-3183, 401-782-3030 (FAX), buffum.harry@epa.gov

### 10.4 Dataset Format

ASCII (CSV) and SAS Export files

### 10.5 Information Concerning Anonymous FTP

Not available

### 10.6 Information Concerning WWW

See Section 10.1 for WWW access

### 10.7 EMAP CD-ROM Containing the Dataset

Data not available on CD-ROM

**11. REFERENCES**

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Texas A & M University, Geochemical and Environmental Research Group. 1990. NOAA Status and Trends, Mussel Watch Program, Analytical Methods. Submitted to NOAA. Rockville (MD): U.S. Dept. of Commerce, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, Ocean Assessment Division.

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Valente, R. and Strobel, C.J. 1993. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program- Estuaries: 1993 Virginian Province Quality Assurance Project Plan. U.S. EPA, NHEERL-AED, Narragansett, RI. May 1993

Weston, D.P. 1988. Macrobenthos-sediment relationships on the continental shelf off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. *Contin. Shelf Res.* 8:267-286.

**12. TABLE OF ACRONYMS**

AED	Atlantic Ecology Division
CP	Carolinian Province
CBP	Chesapeake Bay Program
DB	Delaware Bay
EMAP	Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
GED	Gulf Ecology Division
GERG	Geochemical and Environmental Research Group
MAIA	Mid-Atlantic Integrated Assessment
NHEERL	National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOS	National Ocean Service
NPS	National Park Service
ODU	Old Dominion University

**12. TABLE OF ACRONYMS, cont.**

ORCA	Office of Ocean Resources Conservation and Assessment
ORD	Office of Research and Development
QA/QC	Quality Assurance/Quality Control
TAMU	Texas A&M University
TOC	Total Organic Carbon
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
VER	Versar, Inc.
WWW	World Wide Web

**13. PERSONNEL INFORMATION**

Harry Buffum, Database Manager, OAO Corp.  
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NHEERL-AED  
 27 Tarzwell Drive, Narragansett, RI 02882-1197  
 401-782-3183, 401-782-3030 (FAX), buffum.harry@epa.gov

Don Cobb, Chemist  
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NHEERL-AED  
 27 Tarzwell Drive, Narragansett, RI 02882-1197  
 401-782-9616, 401-782-3030 (FAX), cobb.donald@epa.gov

Dan Dauer, Dept. of Biological Sciences  
 Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA 23529-0266  
 757-683-3595, 757-683-5283 (FAX), ddauer@odu.edu

Courtney T. Hackney, Dept. of Biological Sciences  
 University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Wilmington, NC 28403-3297  
 910-962-3759, hackney@uncwil.edu

Steve Hale, EMAP Information Manager  
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NHEERL-AED  
 27 Tarzwell Drive, Narragansett, RI 02882-1197  
 401-782-3048, 401-782-3030 (FAX), hale.stephen@epa.gov

Michelle Harmon, Program Manager  
 NOAA/NOS  
 1305 East West Highway, 10200 SSMC4, Silver Spring, MD 20901-3281  
 301-713-3034 x619, 301-713-4388 (FAX), michelle.harmon@noaa.gov

Melissa M. Hughes, Data Librarian, EMAP-Estuaries  
 OAO Corp., U.S. EPA NHEERL-AED  
 27 Tarzwell Drive, Narragansett, RI 02882-1197  
 401-782-3184, 401-782-3030 (FAX), hughes.melissa@epa.gov

Jeffrey L. Hyland, Carolinian Province Manager  
 NOAA/NOS/ORCA/CMBAD, NOAA/EPA Joint Nat. Coastal Research and Monitoring Program  
 217 Fort Johnson Rd. (P.O. Box 12559), Charleston, SC 29422-2559  
 843-762-5415, 843-762-5110 (FAX), jeff.hyland@noaa.gov

John Kiddon, AED Oceanographer  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NHEERL-AED  
27 Tarzwell Drive, Narragansett, RI 02882-1197  
401-782-3044, 401-782-3030 (FAX), kiddon.john@epa.gov

Joe LiVolsi, AED QA Officer  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NHEERL-AED  
27 Tarzwell Drive, Narragansett, RI 02882-1197  
401-782-3163, 401-782-3030 (FAX), livolsi.joseph@epa.gov

John Macauley, Field Coordinator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NHEERL-Gulf Ecology Division (GED)  
One Sabine Island Drive, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561  
850-934-9200, 850-934-9201 (FAX), macauley.john@epa.gov

John Paul, Principal Investigator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NHEERL-AED  
27 Tarzwell Drive, Narragansett, RI 02882-1197  
401-782-3037, 401-782-3099 (FAX), paul.john@epa.gov

J. Ananda Ranasinghe, Program Manager  
Versar, Inc.  
9200 Rumsey Rd., Columbia, MD 21045-1934  
410-964-9200, 410-964-5156 (FAX), ranasinghana@versar.com

Charles J. Strobel, Field Coordinator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NHEERL-AED  
27 Tarzwell Drive, Narragansett, RI 02882-1197  
401-782-3180, 401-782-3030 (FAX), strobel.charles@epa.gov

Carl S. Zimmerman, Chief, Division of Resource Management  
Assateague Island National Seashore  
7206 National Seashore Lane, Berlin, MD 21811  
410-641-1443 x213, 410-641-1099 (FAX), carl\_zimmerman@nps.gov