Microbial regime changes and indicators of eutrophication on the Mississippi River identified via a human-powered 2900 km transect

Michael W. Henson[1], Jordan Hanssen[2], Greg Spooner[2], Patrick Fleming[2], Markus Pukonen[2], Frederick Stahr[3], and J. Cameron Thrash[1*]

[1] Department of Biological Sciences, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803, U.S.A.
[2] O.A.R. Northwest, Seattle, WA 98103, U.S.A.
[3] School of Oceanography, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195, U.S.A.

*Correspondence: thrashc@lsu.edu

Abstract

Draining 31 states and roughly 3 million km^2, the Mississippi River (MSR) and its tributaries constitute an essential resource to millions of people for clean drinking water, transportation, agriculture, and industry. Since the turn of the 20th century, MSR water quality has continually rated poorly due to human activity. Acting as first responders, microorganisms can mitigate, exacerbate, and/or serve as predictors for water quality, yet we know little about their community structure or ecology at the whole river scale for large rivers. We collected both biological (16S and 18S rRNA gene amplicons) and physicochemical samples from 38 MSR sites over nearly 3000 km from Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico. These data represent the first of their kind for a top ten river in size, volume, and/or drainage and revealed distinct regime changes between upper and lower MSR microbial communities that corresponded to Strahler's river order and nutrient concentrations. Within these assemblages, we identified subgroups of OTUs from the phyla Acidobacteria, Bacteroidetes, Fungi, and Heterokonts that highly correlated with, and were predictive of, the important eutrophication nutrients nitrate and phosphate. This study offers the most comprehensive view of Mississippi River microbiota to date, establishes the groundwork for future temporal and spatial studies of river perturbations, and provides potential microbial indicators of river health related to eutrophication.

By connecting terrestrial, lotic, and marine systems, rivers perform vital roles in both the transport and processing of compounds in all major global biogeochemical cycles[1–5]. Within the carbon cycle alone, rivers collectively discharge organic carbon to the oceans at over 0.4 Pg C yr^{-1} [6]. Perhaps more importantly, rivers are generally net heterotrophic[7], indicating that they not only transport organic matter but host active metabolic processing of it as well. Conservative estimates place heterotrophic output of the world's fluvial networks (streams, rivers, and estuaries) at 0.32 Pg C yr^{-1} [5,8]. Although rivers contain a small minority of global fresh water at any given moment, the considerable volumes that pass through these systems make them relevant to models attempting to quantify global elemental transformations. However, the fundamental engines of these transformations- microorganisms- have received comparatively little study in rivers relative to other aquatic systems, despite the fact that microbial functions likely play a vital role in ecosystem health for both rivers themselves and their places of discharge.

At 3734 km, the Mississippi River (MSR) is the fourth longest on earth, draining 31 U.S. states and two Canadian provinces- a watershed consisting of 41% of the continental U.S[9,10] The MSR is a major source of drinking water for many U.S. cities; a critical thoroughfare for transportation, commerce, industry, agriculture, and recreation; and conveys the vestiges of human activity to the Gulf of Mexico (GOM). In New Orleans, the average flow rate is over 600,000 cubic feet s^{-1} (cfs)[11], but can exceed 3 million cfs during flood stages[12], carrying over 150 x 10^9 kg of suspended sediment into the northern GOM annually[9,13]. This massive discharge includes excess nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus), primarily from agricultural runoff [14–18], and fuels one of the largest marine zones of seasonal hypoxia in the world[19–22]. Understanding microbial relationships to river eutrophication will inform hypotheses regarding their contributions to either mitigating or exacerbating nutrient input.

Far from a homogenous jumble of organisms ferried downriver, microbial community composition changes with distance from the river mouth and/or from the influence of tributaries[23–25], attributable to changing nutrient concentrations[26–28], dendritic length[4,29], differing dissolved organic matter (DOM) sources[26,30,31], and land use changes[16,27,28,32]. Past studies of the Thames, Danube, Yenisei, and Columbia Rivers have found that planktonic river microbiota were dominated by the phyla Actinobacteria, Proteobacteria, and Bacteriodetes, specifically, taxa such as- hgcI/cal Actinobacteria, *Polynucleobacter* spp., GKS9, and LD28 *Betaproteobacteria*, CL500-29 Bacteriodetes, LD12 freshwater SAR11 *Alphaproteobacteria*, and *Novosphingobium* spp.[4,33,34]. More recent 16S rRNA gene amplicon and metagenomic studies of the Minnesota portion of the MSR corroborated previous research in other rivers that identified an increased proportion[4] or richness[29] of freshwater taxa with river distance, and an increased abundance of "core" river taxa[35] with cumulative residence time[44,22,27,33, 52].

Researchers have suggested that these patterns supported application of the River Continuum Concept (RCC)[10] to river microbiota. The concept postulates that as a river increases in size, the influences of riparian and other inputs will decrease as the river establishes a dominant core community[36], and richness will increase from headwaters to mid-order before decreasing in higher order rivers[36]. Therefore, as continuous systems with increasing volumes and residence times, river microbiota should transition from experiencing strong influences of mass effects from terrestrial and tributary sources to systems where species sorting plays a more important role[4,37,38]. Complicating matters, particle-associated communities in rivers (frequently defined as those found on filters of > ~3 μm) remain distinct from their free-living counterparts[37–39, 53], potentially due to increased production rates from readily obtainable carbon[38, 53]. Typical taxa associated with particles include OTUs related to the Bacteroidetes clades *Flavobacteria* and *Cytophaga*, Planctomycetes, *Rhizobium* spp., and *Methylophilaceae* spp[39,42–44]. However, consistent trends in particle community composition are murky, with recent evidence suggesting organisms may switch between free-living and particle-associated lifestyles depending on substrate availability and chemical queues[42,45]. Thus, rivers constitute complex and highly dynamic ecosystems from a metacommunity perspective.

However, our knowledge of river microbial assemblages, their ecology, dispersal, and their relationship to chemical constituents remains in comparative infancy to that of lakes and oceans. Although microbes play a central role in the RCC[36], microbiologically-oriented transects at the whole-river or -catchment scale have only been conducted for a handful of systems[4,28,29,46,47], and until this work, none had been attempted for any of the largest rivers in the world. Furthermore, little data exists on microbial eukaryotic communities in rivers. During the fall of 2014, we completed the most extensive microbiological survey of the Mississippi River to date with a continual rowed transect over two months. Rowers from the adventure education non-profit OAR Northwest collected samples from Minneapolis, MN to the Gulf of Mexico (2918 km) (Fig. 1A). They also maintained active blogging and social media content and visited 21 schools along the river that incorporated elements of the journey into their curriculum. Our findings greatly expand the current information available on microbial assemblages in major lotic ecosystems and help further delineate the relationships between microbial structure and stream order, nutrients, and volume.

Results

Using rowboats and simple syringe-based filtration protocol, we measured 12 biological, chemical, and physical parameters (e.g. 16S and 18S rRNA gene communities, NH_4^+, river speed, etc.) from 38 sites along a 2918 km transect of the MSR (Fig. 1A). River order increases dramatically at the Missouri confluence (eighth to tenth Strahler order[48]), which corresponded to overall discharge (Fig. 1A) and beta diversity changes discussed below, and thus we used this juncture to separate the upper MSR (0 km – 1042 km, Sites A-S) and lower MSR (1075-

154 2914 km, Sites T-Al). Within the upper MSR, NO_3^-, PO_4^{3-}, and NO_2^- were variable
155 but generally increased downriver until peak concentrations near the confluences
156 of the Illinois and Missouri Rivers. This gave way to lower and more consistent
157 concentrations along the lower MSR (Fig. 1B). Ammonium showed much greater
158 variability along the transect. Turbidity (inversely related to secchi disk visibility)
159 increased steadily downriver to a maximum near the Illinois and Missouri River
160 confluences (1042 km, Site S) (Fig. 1B), then trended downwards for the rest of
161 the transect. Planktonic (< 2.7 μm) cell counts varied between 1 and $3x10^6$
162 cells/mL in the upper MSR, and decreased to high 10^5 cells/mL in the lower MSR
163 (Fig. 1B). Water temperature ranged from 19°C (133km, Site E) to 11.7°C (2552
164 km, Site Ag), and river speed, excluding three sites sampled from shore, was
165 between 5.5 mph at Site Y and 0.4 mph (597 km, Site L) (Table S1). Spearman
166 rank correlations of the measured environmental parameters showed strong
167 positive correlations between nitrate, phosphate, distance, and increased
168 turbidity; while nitrate and phosphate both strongly correlated negatively to water
169 temperature and river speed (Table S1).
170
171 *Bacterial and archaeal communities*
172 We observed a clear distinction between the 0.2-2.7 μm and > 2.7 μm 16S rRNA
173 gene communities (ANOSIM R = 0.65, P = 0.001) (Fig. S1A). Both size fractions
174 had comparable species richness and evenness values that trended upwards
175 downriver (Figs. S3A-B), although an earlier peak occurred for both at sites O-Q
176 (761-999 km) below the Des Moines River and above the Illinois River (Figs.
177 S3A-B). Both size fractions (stress = 0.14 for each) also showed a significant
178 separation between sites above and below the Missouri River confluence
179 (ANOSIM, > 2.7 μm: R = 0.44, P=0.001; 0.2-2.7 μm: R = 0.48, P = 0.001) (Figs.
180 2A and B), that the Eukaryotic fractions mirrored (below). The environmental
181 variables phosphate and turbidity had the highest correlation with the separation
182 between upper and lower > 2.7 μm communities (r = 0.57, r= 0.54, respectively),
183 with water temperature and distance (r > 0.40) also contributing (Fig. 2A). At an
184 OTU level, taxa related to the hgcI/cal clade (Actinobacteria) and unclassified
185 *Bacillaceae* (r > 0.77, P =0.001) contributed most to the separation between the
186 upper and lower > 2.7 communities, with OTUs related to the *Bacillales,*
187 *Gemmatimonadaceae, Peptococcaceae*, and *Micromonosporaceae* clades also
188 a factor (r > 0.70, P = 0.001) (Figure 2A, Table S1). For the 0.2-2.7 μm fraction,
189 distance and nitrate most strongly correlated with the distinction between upper
190 and lower communities among environmental factors (r = 0.59 and r = 0.47,
191 respectively), although phosphate, turbidity, and water temperature (r > 0.40 for
192 each) also contributed (Fig. 2B). OTUs related to *Flavobacterium* and a
193 unclassified Bacterium (closest NCBI BLAST hit *Acidovorax* sp., KM047473),
194 most strongly contributed to the separation between the 0.2-2.7 μm communities
195 (r > 0.52, P = 0.001). Other important OTUs belonged to the clades
196 Bacteroidetes, *Microbacteriaceae*, *Clostridiales*, and *Holophagaceae* (r > 0.49, P
197 = 0.001) (Figure 2B, Table S1).

198 At the phylum level, Proteobacteria, Actinobacteria, and Bacteroidetes
199 dominated bacterial communities in both fractions (Figs. 3A and B) (Table S1).
200 Proteobacteria in the > 2.7 μm fraction showed wide fluctuations in abundance
201 (Fig. 3A), whereas their 0.2-2.7 μm counterparts generally increased in relative
202 abundance downriver (Fig. 3B). 0.2-2.7 μm Bacteroidetes and Actinobacteria
203 generally decreased in the upper river and stabilized in the lower river, but
204 showed considerable variation in abundance in the larger fraction. Cyanobacteria
205 in the > 2.7 μm fraction strongly and negatively correlated with increased turbidity
206 (Spearman rank = 0.67). Both > 2.7 μm and 0.2-2.7 μm Acidobacteria had a
207 strong positive correlation with river distance (Wilcoxon single ranked test, P = <
208 0.01) (Fig. 3A and B). Within the 0.2-2.7 μm fraction, the five most abundant
209 OTUs were classified as LD12 (OTU11), two hgcI clade OTUs (OTU4, OTU7),
210 *Limnohabitans* sp. (OTU2), and LD28 (OTU8) (Table S1). Comparatively, an
211 unclassified *Methylophilaceae* (OTU1), *Planktothrix* sp. (OTU12), NS11-12
212 marine group (OTU21), *Aquirestis* sp. (OTU17), and unclassified
213 *Sphingobacteriales* (OTU25) were the most abundant OTUs in the > 2.7 μm
214 (Table S1). Archaea occurred at much lower relative abundances: we found only
215 eight OTUs belonging to the Euryarchaeota and Thaumarchaeota. 0.2-2.7 μm
216 Thaumarchaetoa increased in abundance along the transect (Fig. 3B), but at less
217 so than those in the > 2.7 μm fraction (Fig. 3A). In both fractions, we only
218 detected Euryarcheota at very low abundances.
219 We defined the core microbiome as those OTUs detectable after
220 normalization in greater than 90% of the samples. The > 2.7 μm and 0.2-2.7 μm
221 core microbiomes consisted of 95 and 106 OTUs, respectively, classified into
222 eight different phyla- Proteobacteria, Actinobacteria, Bacteroidetes,
223 Cyanobacteria, Verrucomicrobia, Chloroflexi, Chlorobi, Gemmatimonadetes- and
224 some remained unclassified (Table S1). Core microbome relative abundance in
225 both fractions decreased along the upper river but stabilized in the lower river
226 (Fig. 4A). We confirmed this effect by analyzing the upper and lower core
227 microbiomes separately. Although the total OTU numbers changed (81 and 116
228 OTUs in the upper MSR and 160 and 144 OTUs in the lower MSR for the > 2.7
229 μm and 0.2-2.7 μm fractions, respectively), the trends remained the same (Fig.
230 S4).
231
232 *16S rRNA gene environmental ontology*
233 We successfully classified 313 of the 945 OTUs with EnvO terminology (Table
234 S1). Of those, freshwater organisms dominated, although their relative
235 abundance in both the > 2.7 μm and 0.2-2.7 μm fractions decreased with river
236 distance before stabilizing in the lower MSR (Fig. S5A-B). However LD12, the
237 most abundant OTU in our dataset and a well-established freshwater organism,
238 did not receive an EnvO classification at all, indicating the limitations of this
239 technique with current database annotations. Terrestrial organisms from the >
240 2.7 μm fraction decreased along the transect (Fig. S5A), while the 0.2-2.7 μm
241 fraction remained stable (Fig. S5B). Although representing a minor fraction of

242 total OTUs, sediment-associated microorganisms remained steady along the
243 river in both fractions.. Taxa associated with anthropogenic sources in both
244 fractions increased along the river(Fig. S5A-B).
245
246 *Microbial eukaryotic communities*
247 Eukaryotic communities, observed via the 18S rRNA gene, also showed a
248 significant separation between > 2.7 μm and 0.2-2.7 μm fractions (R = 0.689, P =
249 0.001) (Fig. S1B). As expected due to generally larger cell sizes in microbial
250 eukaryotes compared to prokaryotes, species richness remained higher in the >
251 2.7 μm vs. 0.2-2.7 μm fractions (Fig. S3C-D). Richness in the > 2.7 μm fraction
252 gradually increased downriver, similarly to prokaryotic communities, but remained
253 relatively stable among the 0.2-2.7 μm fraction. Both the > 2.7 μm (stress = 0.113
254 and 0.2-2.7 μm (stress = 0.146) fractions also showed a significant separation
255 between the lower and upper MSR (ANOSIM, >2.7 μm: R = 0.696, P=0.001; 0.2-
256 2.7 μm: R = 0.576, P = 0.001) (Fig. 2C, D). Distance and phosphate constituted
257 the top two environmental factors influencing this distinction (r =0.75, r =0.48; r =
258 0.70, r =0.54, respectively) (Fig. 2C, D; Table S1). No other factors had
259 correlations > 0.40 (Table S1). At the OTU level, taxa related to an unclassified
260 Ochrophyta (OTU63) and unclassified Eukaryote (OTU1) separated the MSR
261 communities in the 0.2-2.7 μm (r > 0.63, P= 0.001), while the same unclassified
262 Eukaryote OTU (OTU1) and a second unclassified Eukaryote (OTU222)
263 contributed most to separating the >2.7 μm communities (r > 0.80, P = 0.001)
264 (Figure 2C and D, Table S1).
265 Stramenopiles (or Heterokonts), encompassing diatoms and many other
266 forms of algae, and OTUs that could not be classified at the phylum level,
267 dominated both the > 2.7 μm and 0.2-2.7 μm communities (Fig. 5).
268 Stramenopiles accounted for over 25% of both communities, with higher
269 abundances in the upper vs. lower river. We observed a similar trend of disparate
270 abundances between the upper and lower river for > 2.7 μm Cryptomonadales
271 and 0.2-2.7 μm Nucletmycea, which include fungi (Fig. 5A; Table S1). Within the
272 0.2-2.7 μm fraction, we classified the five most abundant OTUs as three
273 unclassified *Bacillariophytina* (OTU7, OTU14, OTU9), a *Pythium* sp. (OTU170),
274 and a unclassified *Cryptomonas* (OTU11) (Table S1). Comparatively, two
275 unclassified *Eukaryotes* (OTU2 and OTU1), a unclassified *Stramenopiles*
276 (OTU3), a unclassified *Perkinsidae* (OTU13), and a unclassified *Chrysophyceae*
277 (OTU6) had the highest abundance in the > 2.7 μm (Table S1).
278 Eighty OTUs comprised the > 2.7 μm core microbiome, averaging 28% of
279 aggregate community relative abundance (Fig. 4B). We classified these as
280 *Alveolata*, *Cryptophceae*, *Nucletmycea*, *Stramenopiles*, or unclassified
281 Eurkaryota (Table S1). Again, consistent with larger organism sizes, and thus
282 fewer OTUs overall, the 0.2-2.7 μm Eukaryotic core microbiome comprised only
283 21 OTUs that, in aggregate, averaged 20% of the community relative abundance
284 across all samples (Fig. 4B). These OTUs consisted of *Alveolata*, *Nucletmycea*,
285 *Stramenopiles*, or unclassified Eurkaryota (Table S1). While the 0.2-2.7 μm core

286 microbiome remained relatively stable along the river, the > 2.7 μm core
287 decreased along the upper MSR before stabilizing in the lower river, similarly to
288 that of the prokaryotes (Fig. 4B).
289
290 *Network analyses identify indicator taxa associated with eutrophication*
291 Since increased nitrogen and phosphorous is of interest for stakeholders both
292 along the river and in the GOM, we evaluated relationships between individual
293 OTUs and these nutrients to identify taxa indicative of eutrophication. Among 0.2-
294 2.7 μm prokaryotes, a co-correlation network (submodule) strongly associated
295 with nitrate (r = 0.6, P = 7e-08) (Fig. S6A) comprised 77 OTUs, mostly from the
296 Proteobacteria. OTU relative abundances explained 42% of the variance in
297 nitrate (LOOCV, R^2=0.65; corr = 0.65, P =1.e-09), and the top four OTUs by VIP
298 score belonged to the Proteobacteria and Bacteroidetes (Fig. 6B; FigS6A; Table
299 S1). Of these, three were highly correlated to nitrate (r > 0.50) (Table S1):
300 unclassified *Comamonadaceae, Mucilaginibacter,* and *Pseudospirillum* spp..
301 OTUs that had more than 8 node connections, indicating taxa co-correlating with
302 numerous others, included a *Mucilaginibacter* sp., a *Novosphingobium* sp., and a
303 *Caulobacter* sp. (Fig. 6B, Table S1).
304 The submodule best correlated with phosphate (r = 0.53, P = 2e-06) (Fig.
305 S6) comprised 151 OTUs that explained 80% of the variance (LOOCV, R^2=0.80;
306 corr = 0.89, P = < 2.3e-16) (Fig. S6D). OTUs with VIP scores > 1 belonged to
307 seven different phyla (Table S1), with the top four identified as an unclassified
308 *Holophagaceae*, an unclassified *Gemmatimonadaceae*, an unclassified
309 *Burkholderiaceae,* and a *Pseudosprillum* sp. (Table S1). Three of these four
310 OTUs had Pearson correlations with phosphate greater than 0.62 (Fig. 6B). The
311 most highly interconnected OTU within the submodule was an unclassified
312 Acidobacteria (Table S1).
313 In the > 2.7 μm fraction, the prokaryotic submodule with the highest
314 correlation to nitrate (r = 0.56, P = 3e-07) (Fig. S7A) had 133 OTUs and
315 explained 69% of the variation in nitrate (LOOVC, R^2 = 0.69; corr = 0.83, P= <
316 2.2e-16). The four highest VIP scoring OTUs, an *Anabaena* sp., a
317 *Flavobacterium* sp., an unclassified bacterium, and a member of the
318 *Sphingobacteriales* NS11-12 marine group, anticorrelated with nitrate (Fig. 7A,
319 Table S1). A NCBI BLAST of the unclassified bacterium returned no significant
320 hits > 90% identity to named organisms. OTUs with the highest node centrality
321 (> 20) belonged to two clades of bacteria, *Sphingomonadales*
322 (*Alphaproteobacteria*) and *Sphingobacteriales* (Bacteroidetes), and all correlated
323 positively to nitrate (r > 0.48, Table S1).
324 When considering phosphate, the most significant submodule showed a
325 modest correlation (r = 0.53, P = 1e-06, Fig. S7A), but OTU abundances could
326 only explain 48% of the variation of measured phosphate (LOOVC, R^2= 0.48;
327 corr= 0.77, P = 4.88e-15). Proteobacteria constituted the majority of the 80 OTUs
328 from the submodule, and the top four scoring VIP OTUs were an unclassified
329 *Gammaproteobacteria*, an *Arcicella* sp., an unclassified *Cytophagaceae*, and a

330 *Nitrospira* sp. (Fig. 7B, Table S1); the latter two had moderate correlations to
331 phosphate (r = > 0.55). The OTUs with the highest number of node connections
332 were a *Woodsholea* sp. from the *Caulobacterales* family and the same *Nitrospira*
333 OTU (Table S1).
334 Among 0.2-2.7 μm Eukaryotic size fraction, a submodule strongly
335 associated with nitrate (r = 0.39, P = 6e-04) (Fig. S8A) comprised 39 OTUs,
336 mostly from the phylum Stramenopiles. OTU relative abundances explained 38%
337 of the variance in nitrate (LOOCV, R^2=0.38; corr = 0.62, P =2.97e-9), and the top
338 four OTUs by VIP score classified as an unclassified *Chrysophyceae*, an
339 unclassified *Ochrophyta*, and an unclassified *Chromulinales* (Fig. 8B; FigS8A;
340 Table S1). Of these, two highly correlated to nitrate (r > 0.49) (Table S1): the
341 *Chrysophyceae,* and *Chromulinales* OTUs.
342 The submodule best correlated with phosphate (r = 0.56, P = 2e-07) (Fig.
343 S8A) comprised 56 OTUs that explained 80% of the variance (LOOCV, R^2=0.80;
344 corr = 0.89, P = < 2e-16). OTUs with VIP scores > 1 belonged to four different
345 phyla (Table S1), with the top four identified as an unclassified
346 *Peronosporomycetes*, an unclassified *Ochrophyta*, an unclassified Eukaryote,
347 and an unclassified Stramenopiles. (Table S1). All four OTUs had Pearson
348 correlations with phosphate greater than 0.60, two were negative (Fig. 8B). The
349 most highly interconnected OTU within the submodule was an unclassified
350 Eukaryote (Table S1).
351 Among the > 2.7 μm Eukaryote taxa, submodules with strongest
352 correlations to nitrate and phosphate (NO_3^-: r = 0.52, P = 2e-06; PO_4^{3-}: r = 0.60, P
353 = 2e-08, Fig. S9A) had smaller membership than those for prokaryotes,
354 comprising 59 and 39 OTUs, respectively. The OTUs in the submodule most
355 strongly correlated with nitrate could predict 57% of observed variation in nitrate
356 (LOOVC, R^2=0.572; corr = 0.759, P= 6.7e-15). OTUs with top VIP scores were
357 two unclassified Chrysophyceae, an unclassified Ochrophyta, and an
358 unclassified Diatom (Fig. 8B; Table S1). When considering phosphate,
359 submodule OTU abundances predicted 62% of measured concentrations
360 (LOOVC, R^2 = 0.618; corr = 0.799, P = < 2e-16). An unclassified Eukaryote and
361 an unclassified Peronosporomycetes occupied top two phosphate-associated
362 positions according to VIP score (Fig. 9B; Table S1).
363
364 **Discussion**
365 Our 2914 km transect of the MSR has supplied the longest
366 microbiologically oriented transect of a top ten river based on volume, length, or
367 drainage. Water samples illustrated a river continually inundated with nutrients
368 and sediment in its upper portion that gave way to more consistent levels in the
369 lower river (Fig. 1B). These distinct scenarios mirrored the different microbial
370 regimes separated by the Missouri river confluence (Fig. 2), which differed from
371 the historical distinction of the upper and lower MSR at the Ohio River confluence
372 in Cairo, IL, but matched the separation based on changes in Strahler order from
373 eight to ten[48]. In general, both prokaryotic fractions and the > 2.7 μm fraction of

374 eukaryotic communities increased in richness downriver while the percent of core
375 community taxa decreased in the upper MSR before settling in the lower river
376 (Figs. 4, S3), concomitant with increased stability of environmental factors (Fig.
377 1B). Co-occurrence network analyses identified important potential indicator taxa
378 for the eutrophication nutrients nitrate and phosphate that may help future efforts
379 to detect and quantify imminent changes in river water quality.
380 In general, the most abundant OTUs throughout the MSR corresponded to
381 typical freshwater taxa observed in other important riverine/aquatic
382 studies[4,25,29,35,49,50], such as LD12 (*Alphaproteobacteria*), hcgI-cal clade
383 (Actinobacteria), *Polynucelobacter* (*Betaproteobacteria*), LD28
384 (*Betaproteobacteria*), and *Limnohabitans* (*Betaproteobacteria*) (Table S1).
385 Though our nutrient measurements mirrored conditions found in previous studies
386 of the Danube, Thames, and upper Mississippi rivers[4,27,34], the relative
387 abundances of important phyla differed. Specifically, in our study Proteobacteria
388 remained the most abundant phylum, while Bacteroidetes and Actinobacteria
389 decreased (Fig. 3), whereas in the Minnesota portion of the MSR[35], Thames[29],
390 Danube[4], and Columbia Rivers[40], Bacteroidetes dominated headwaters while
391 Actinobacteria dominated further downriver. General increases in MSR species
392 richness with distance and decreases in the percent core community along the
393 upper river contrasted predictions by the RCC[36] and observations in previous
394 studies[4,27] where these trends were reversed. Importantly, we did not sample the
395 true headwaters of the MSR (Lake Itasca to above St. Cloud), and therefore at
396 the point of first sampling, the MSR already constituted an eighth order river.
397 Ultimately, some of these variant observations may result from different sampling
398 methodologies, but also from biological signal related to unique environmental
399 conditions and human impacts, changes in the level of river engineering with
400 distance, and the magnitude of the MSR (in terms of volume and catchment
401 complexity) and its tributaries relative to previously sampled systems. However,
402 perhaps some differences lie in the proportion and scale at which the varied
403 influences of dispersal and environmental filtering occur.
404 Many of our results suggest similar underlying ecological mechanisms with
405 other river systems, even though the specific microbial community patterns differ.
406 Multiple studies have shown evidence for the importance of mass effects in
407 headwaters, while species sorting dominates with increased residence time as
408 rivers grow in size[44,52]. Our data suggests that mass effects indeed play a role in
409 the upper MSR, although instead of only in the headwaters, this process
410 continues for almost a third of the length of the river. Increased turbidity
411 correlated with decreases in freshwater bacteria (Spearman rank correlation, >
412 2.7 μm R = 0.55; 0.2-2.7 μm R = 0.51) and the core microbiome (Spearman rank
413 correlation, >2.7 μm R = 0.53; 0.2-2.7 μm R = 0.63) during the first ~1000 km- the
414 upper MSR- whereas these variables and some nutrient concentrations (Fig. 1)
415 stabilized in the lower MSR. These patterns are consistent with communities
416 under the influence of mass effects from tributaries in the upper MSR. Once the
417 MSR grew to a tenth order river, the large volume and size potentially buffered it

418 from allochthonous influences, allowing species sorting effects to dominate. The
419 lower river represents a more stable environment (e.g. nutrient concentrations)
420 with its increased size and volume, contrasting the more variant upper MSR.
421 Though the river speed increases, the effective residence time also increases
422 since taxa no longer experience rapidly changing environmental variables.
423 That we still observed variation between microbial communities along the
424 lower MSR concurs with environmental filtering attributable to unmeasured
425 bottom-up factors, such as the quality and quantity of DOM, or top-down
426 influences such as predation or viral lysis. An overall community shift from a
427 mixture of allochthonous members to a "native" population requires growth rates
428 that allow taxa to overcome mass effects over a given distance[53]. The lower river
429 also provides ample opportunities for microbial community differentiation based
430 on average prokaryotic growth rates[4], especially among particle-associated (>
431 2.7 μm) taxa[40]. Thus, while the aggregate patterns in particular phyla and
432 taxonomic richness may differ from other systems, similar ecological processes
433 may still occur, but the relative proportion of distance whereby mass effects vs.
434 species sorting dominate fosters unique community dynamics.
435 Within microbial communities lie taxa with unique roles as potential
436 mitigators of human impact. MSR water quality has continually been rated low[54],
437 suffers from significant eutrophication, and causes one of the largest worldwide
438 zones of seasonal hypoxia in the northern GOM[21]. Identification of
439 microorganisms with relationships to nitrogen and phosphorous will inform efforts
440 to model nutrient remediation and provide important targets for future study.
441 However, such microbial indicators of biological integrity (IBIs- metrics to quantify
442 the health of an aquatic system[55]), require better development[55–57]. Phosphate
443 and nitrate increased along the upper MSR and generally stabilized in the lower
444 river (Fig. 1). Using co-correlation networks and partial least squares modeling
445 (PLS), we identified submodules with containing taxa with significant predictive
446 power for phosphate and nitrate concentrations (Figs. 6-9). Individual OTUs
447 within these submodules with strong correlations to nitrate or phosphate, and VIP
448 scores > 1 within the PLS models, represent potential indicator taxa for these
449 nutrients.
450 Taxa in a 0.2-2.7 μm fraction submoule could predict 80% of the variance
451 in phosphate concentrations, with much weaker correlations to nitrate. A
452 *Holophagaceae* OTU (OTU33) was the top 0.2-2.7 μm taxon for predicting
453 phosphate concentrations based on VIP scores (Fig. 6B). It also occupied an
454 important role in separating communities at a beta-diversity level (Fig. 2B), and
455 resided in the core microbiome. A 2014 study on the tributaries of the MSR found
456 that the Ohio River had much higher abundance of Acidobacteria relative to other
457 tributaries[39], which corroborates our finding of increasing Acidobacteria
458 downriver. Although the *Holophagaceae* comprises diverse and abundant taxa[58],
459 many environmentally relevant taxa remain elusive to cultivation efforts[59]. One of
460 the few cultivated representatives from the *Holophagaceae* family, *Holophaga*
461 *foetida,* has the genomic capacity to accumulate phosphorous and synthesize

462 polyphosphate via a polyphosphate kinase[60]. While this organism has an
463 obligately anaerobic lifestyle* that makes it an unlikely match for the OTU, it
464 indicates genomic potential that may span the clade. An unclassified
465 *Gemmatimonadaceae* (OTU60) from the 0.2-2.7 μm fraction correlated strongly
466 with phosphate and also played a strong role in driving beta-diversity changes
467 between the upper and lower river (Fig. 2)
468 Contrasting the 0.2-2.7 μm taxa, a submodule in the > 2.7 μm fraction
469 could predict 69% of nitrate concentration variance. Within the prokaryotic > 2.7
470 μm taxa, an *Anabaena* sp. (OTU40) had the top VIP score among submodule
471 taxa predicting nitrate, correlated negatively (Fig. 7A), and had membership in
472 the core microbiome. The nitrogen-fixing *Anabaena*[61] typically bloom in low
473 dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN) conditions, making the absence of these
474 consistent with high DIN. Organisms in the *Sphingomonadaceae* (e.g.,
475 *Novosphingobium* spp.) also contributed strongly to the PLS models predicting
476 nitrate with both > 2.7 μm (Fig. 7A) and 0.2-2.7 μm (Fig. 6A) taxa (Table S1).
477 *Novosphingobium* isolates have previously been associated with eutrophic
478 environments[34,64–66] and some can reduce nitrate[64,65], making these OTUs good
479 candidate IBIs within the MSR basin.
480 Notably, a *Nitrospira* sp. (OTU96) significantly correlated with phosphate
481 (R^2=0.60, P=<0.001) and and was the second most important taxa for predicting
482 phosphate concentrations in the > 2.7 μm fraction (VIP = 1.8). *Nitrospira* occupy
483 a key role as nitrite oxidizers, and have been found in various environments
484 including the "Dead Zone" in the GoM[22] and in correlation with wastewater
485 treatment effluent[67]. This OTU makes an intriguing IBI candidate in a watershed
486 impacted by wastewater[68] and that directly influences the Dead Zone.
487 Additionally, as an organism that creates nitrate, this might represent a taxon that
488 exacerbates, rather than mitigates, the effects of eutrophication.
489 Within Eukaryotes, multiple algae and diatoms strongly correlated with
490 nitrate and phosphate (Fig. 8 and 9; Table S1), and specifically *Chrysophyceae*
491 taxa from both fractions correlated strongly with nitrate (Fig. 8A). *Chrysophyceae*
492 (golden algae) commonly occupy river systems[69] including the MSR[68], can be
493 autotrophic and mixotrophic[70], and may serve as predators of prokaryotes[71].
494 While we also identified many other eukaryotes as important predictors of
495 nutrients, poor taxonomic resolution hindered our ability to discuss them further.
496 Improved cultivation and systematics of key microbial eukaryotes will be vital to
497 understanding river nutrient dynamics.
498 While the most geographically comprehensive to date, this study only
499 encompasses a snapshot in time for the MSR. Seasonal changes that have been
500 observed in the Minnesota portion of the upper MSR[52] and the Columbia
501 River[52,72,73] undoubtedly influence this dynamic system. Future studies should
502 incorporate microbial responses, at a full river scale, to seasonal pulse events
503 (e.g. rain, snow melt) and how river size and volume may buffer local microbial
504 communities from allochthonous inputs. Our current research highlights the
505 uniqueness and complexities of the MSR ecosystem. The observed association

between changes in Strahler's river order, nutrient dynamics, and community composition indicates the importance of hydrology[46,47] on the spatial dynamics structuring microbial communities and provides baseline information for future MSR studies that incorporate greater temporal and spatial resolution. With water quality and river health of growing local and global importance[54,74], the determination of candidate microbial IBIs also provides impetus for targeted research on their functions and further investigation of these organisms as sentinels of river health.

Materials and Methods

Sampling and Cell Counts

We used rowboats and a simple filtration protocol (Supplementary Information) to collect water from 39 sites along a continually rowed transect of the MSR, starting in Lake Itasca and ending in the GOM, over 70 days from September 18th to November 26th, 2014. Sites were chosen to be near major cities and above and below large tributaries. After some samples were removed due to insufficient sequence data, contamination, or incomplete metadata (see below), the final usable set of samples included 38 sites starting at Minneapolis (Fig. 1A, Table S1). Most sampling occurred within the body of the river, although due to safety issues, three samples were collected from shore (Table S1). We collected duplicate samples at each site, but because separate rowboat teams frequently collected these sometimes several dozen meters apart, they cannot be considered true biological replicates and we have treated them as independent samples. At each site, we filtered 120 mL of water sequentially through a 2.7 μm GF/D filter (Whatman GE, New Jersey, USA) housed in a 25mm polycarbonate holder (TISCH, Ohio, USA) followed by a 0.2 μm Sterivex filter (EMD Millipore, Darmstadt, Germany) with a sterile 60 mL syringe (BD, New Jersey, USA). We refer to fractions collected on the 2.7 μm and 0.22 μm filters as > 2.7 μm and 0.2-2.7 μm, respectively. Flow-through water from the first 60 mL was collected in autoclaved acid-washed 60 mL polycarbonate bottles. Both filters were wrapped in parafilm, and together with the filtrate, placed on ice in Yeti Roadie 20 coolers (Yeti, Austin, TX) until shipment to LSU. Further, 9 mL of whole water for cell counts was added to sterile 15 mL Falcon tubes containing 1 mL of formaldehyde and placed into the cooler. We monitored cooler temperature with HOBO loggers (Onset, Bourne, MA) to ensure samples stayed at ≤ 4°C. The final cooler containing samples from sites P-AI had substantial ice-melt. Though our filters were wrapped in parafilm, we processed melted cooler water alongside our other samples to control for potential contamination in these filters. Given that some of our samples were expected to contain low biomass, we also included duplicate process controls for kit contamination[75,76] with unused sterile filters. Flow-through 0.2 μm filtered water from each collection was analyzed for SiO_4, PO_4^{3-}, NH_4^+, NO_3^-, and NO_2^- (μg/L) at the University of Washington Marine Chemistry

550 Laboratory
551 (http://www.ocean.washington.edu/story/Marine+Chemistry+Laboratory). Aboard-
552 rowboat measurements were taken for temperature and turbidity. We determined
553 turbidity by deploying a secchi disk (Wildco, Yulee, FL), while drifting with the
554 current so the line hung vertically. It was lowered until no longer visible, then
555 raised until just visible, and measured for its distance below the waterline. We
556 then calculated secchi depth from the average of two measurements.
557 Temperature was measured with probes from US Water Systems (Indianapolis,
558 IN), rinsed with distilled water between samples. Samples for cell counts were
559 filtered through a 2.7 μm GF/D filter, stained with 1x Sybr Green (Lonza), and
560 enumerated using the Guava EasyCyte (Millipore) flow cytometer as previously
561 described[77].
562
563 *DNA extraction and Sequencing*
564 DNA was extracted from both filter fractions and controls using a MoBio
565 PowerWater DNA kit (MoBio Laboratories, Carlsbad, CA) following the
566 manufacturer's protocol with one minor modification: in a biosafety cabinet (The
567 Baker Company, Stanford, ME), sterivex filter housings were cracked open using
568 sterilized pliers and filters were then removed by cutting along the edge of the
569 plastic holder with a sterile razor blade before being placed into bead-beating
570 tubes. DNA was eluted with sterile MilliQ water, quantified using the Qubit2.0
571 Fluorometer (Life Technologies, Carlsbad, CA), and stored at -20° C. Bacterial
572 and archaeal sequences were amplified at the V4 region of the 16S rRNA gene
573 using the 515f and 806r primer set[78], and eukaryotic sequences from the V9
574 region of the 18S rRNA gene using the 1391r and EukBR primer set[79]. Amplicons
575 were sequenced on an Illumina MiSeq as paired-end 250 bp reads at Argonne
576 National Laboratory. Sequencing of the 16S and 18S rRNA gene amplicons
577 resulted in 13253140 and 13240531 sequences, respectively.
578
579 *Sequence Analysis*
580 We analyzed amplicon data with Mothur v.1.33.3[80] using the Silva v.119
581 database[81,82]. Briefly, 16S and 18S rRNA gene sequences were assembled into
582 contigs and discarded if the contig had any ambiguous base pairs, possessed
583 repeats greater than 8 bp, or were greater than 253 or 184 bp in length,
584 respectively. Contigs were aligned using the Silva rRNA v.119 database,
585 checked for chimeras using UCHIME[83], and classified also using the Silva rRNA
586 v.119 database. Contigs classified as chloroplast, eukaryotes, mitochondria, or
587 "unknown;" or as chloroplast, bacteria, archaea, mitochondria, or "unknown;"
588 were removed from 16S or 18S rRNA gene data, respectively. The remaining
589 contigs were clustered into operational taxonomic units (OTUs) using a 0.03
590 dissimilarity threshold ($OTU_{0.03}$). After these steps, 146725 and 131352 OTUs
591 remained for the 16S and 18S rRNA gene communities, respectively.
592
593 *Sample quality control*

To evaluate the potential for contamination from extraction kits, cooler water in the last set of samples, or leaking/bursting of pre-filters, all samples were evaluated with hierarchical clustering and NMDS analysis. Hierarchical clustering was preformed in R using the *hclust* function with methods set to "average", from the vegan package[84]. Samples were removed from our analysis if they were observed to be outliers in both the NMDS and hierarchical clustering such that they grouped with our process controls. The process and cooler water controls were extreme outliers in both, as was sample L2 (Fig. S1, S2). Sterivex and prefilter samples generally showed strong separation with the exception of three 16S rRNA gene samples- STER X2, W2, S2 (Fig. S1, S2). The only other samples that were removed were due to missing chemical data (Lake Itasca1-2, A1-2) or failed sequencing (16S STER Af1; 16S PRE S2, X2; 18S PRE O1). Not including process or cooler water controls, 152 samples were sequenced each for prokaryotic and eukaryotic communities. After these QC measures, 144 and 149 samples remained in the analyses from the 16S and 18S rRNA gene amplicons, respectively. Further, to control for potential contaminants, any OTU with greater 20 reads in the process or cooler controls was removed from the data set. 146725 and 131327 OTUs remained after these steps for 16S and 18S rRNA gene communities, respectively.

Alpha and Beta Diversity

$OTU_{0.03}$ analyses were completed with the R statistical environment v.3.2.1[85]. Using the package *PhyloSeq*[86], alpha-diversity was first calculated on the unfiltered OTUs using the "estimate richness" command within PhyloSeq, which calculates Chao1[86]. After estimating chao1, potentially erroneous rare OTUs, defined here as those without at least two sequences in 20% of the data, were discarded. After this filter, the dataset contained 950 and 724 16S and 18S rRNA gene OTUs, respectively. For site-specific community comparisons, OTU counts were normalized using the package DESeq2[87] with a variance stabilizing transformation[88]. Beta-diversity between samples was examined using Bray-Curtis distances via ordination with non-metric multidimensional scaling (NMDS). Analysis of similarity (ANOSIM) was used to test for significant differences between groups of samples of the NMDS analyses using the *anosim* function in the vegan package[84]. The influence of environmental parameters on beta-diversity was calculated in R with the *envfit* function.

Network analyses and modeling

To identify specific OTUs with strong relationships to environmental parameters (e.g. turbidity, NO_3^-), we employed weighted gene co-expression network analysis (WGCNA)[89] as previously described[90] for OTU relative abundances. First, a similarity matrix of nodes (OTUs) was created based on pairwise Pearson correlations across samples. This was transformed into an adjacency matrix by raising the similarity matrix to a soft threshold power (p; p = 6 for 16S and 18S > 2.7 μm, p = 4 for 16S 0.2-2.7 μm) that ensured scale-free topology. Submodules

638 of highly co-correlating OTUs were defined with a topological overlap matrix and
639 hierarchical clustering. Each submodule, represented by an eigenvalue, was
640 pairwise Pearson correlated to individual environmental parameters (Figs. S6-8
641 A). To explore the relationship of submodule structure to these parameters,
642 submodule OTUs were plotted using their individual correlation to said parameter
643 (here nitrate or phosphate) and their submodule membership, defined as the
644 number of connections within the module (Figs. S6-8 B, D). Strong correlations
645 between submodule structure and an environmental parameter facilitate
646 identification of OTUs that are highly correlated to that parameter. To evaluate
647 the predictive relationship between a submodule and a parameter, we employed
648 partial least square regression (PLS) regression analysis. PLS maximizes the
649 covariance between two parameters (e.g. OTU abundance and nitrate
650 concentration) to define the degree to which the measured value (OTU
651 abundance) can predict the response variable (nutrient concentration). The PLS
652 model was permutated a 1000 times and Pearson correlations were calculated
653 between the response variable and leave-one-out cross-validation (LOOCV)
654 predicted values. Modeled values were then compared with measured values to
655 determine the explanatory power of the relationships (Figs. S6-8 C, E). Relative
656 contributions of individual OTUs to the PLS regression were calculated using
657 value of importance in the projection (VIP)[91] determination. PLS was run using
658 the R package *pls*[92], while VIP was run using an additional code found here:
659 http://mevik.net/work/software/VIP.R.
660
661 *Environmental Ontology*
662 Environmental ontology of individual 16S rRNA gene OTUs was determined
663 using the SEQenv (v1.2.4) pipeline (https://github.com/xapple/seqenv) as
664 previously described[4]. Briefly, representative sequences of our OTUs were
665 searched against the NCBI nt database (updated on 07/01/2016) using BLAST
666 and filtered for hits with a minimum of 99% identity. From each hit, a text query of
667 the metadata was performed to identify terms representing the sequence's
668 environmental source. The text was mined for EnvO terms
669 (http://environmentontology.org/) and the frequency in which the terms appeared
670 for each OTU was recorded. Using the seq_to_names output provided by
671 SEQenv, EnvO terms were formed into eight groups: Freshwater, Aquatic
672 Undetermined, Salt Water, Anthropogenic, Other, Terrestrial, Sediment, and
673 Unclassified (Table S1). To be assigned a group, an OTU had to have the
674 majority (> 50%) of its hits classified to that term, while equal distribution between
675 two or more groups were classified as Unclassified. OTUs that returned no
676 significant hits to an EnvO term were assigned to a ninth category, NA. OTUs
677 and their corresponding relative abundances were merged based on the
678 assigned group and plotted.
679
680 *Accession numbers*

Community 16S and 18S rRNA gene community sequence fastq files are available at the NCBI Sequence Read Archive under the accession numbers: SRR3485674- SRR3485971 and SRR3488881- SRR3489315.

Code Availability

All code used for Mothur, SeqENV, PhyloSeq, WGCNA, and PLS regression analyses can be found on the Thrash lab website (http://thethrashlab.com/publications) with the reference to this manuscript linked to "Supplementary Data".

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Department of Biological Sciences, College of Science, and the Office of Research and Economic Development at Louisiana State University, and the College of the Environment at University of Washington. We would like to thank Dr. Gary King and Dr. Caroline Fortunato for their friendly reviews. The authors also thank the countless volunteers, schools, and organizations that facilitated the research. We specifically thank Pete Weess, Jessica Zimmerman, Katy Welch, Brian Moffitt, and David Cheney for helping organize the shipment of coolers between sites, and the OAR Northwest sponsors- Seattle Yacht Club Foundation, Yetti Coolers, and the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium. A full list of sponsors and volunteers can be found on the OAR Northwest website (oarnorthwest.org). We would also like to thank Dr. Matthew Sullivan and Dr. Simon Roux for their support and help scripting the code for the WGCNA and sPLS analyses. Lastly, we would like to thank Mrs. Ginger Thrash, who connected the Thrash lab to OAR Northwest.

Author Contributions

M.W.H., J.H., F.S., and J.C.T. designed the study, J.H., G.S., P.F., and M.P. collected the data, M.W.H. processed the samples, M.W.H. and J.C.T. analyzed the data, M.W.H. and J.C.T. wrote the manuscript, and all authors contributed to the editing of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no competing financial interests.

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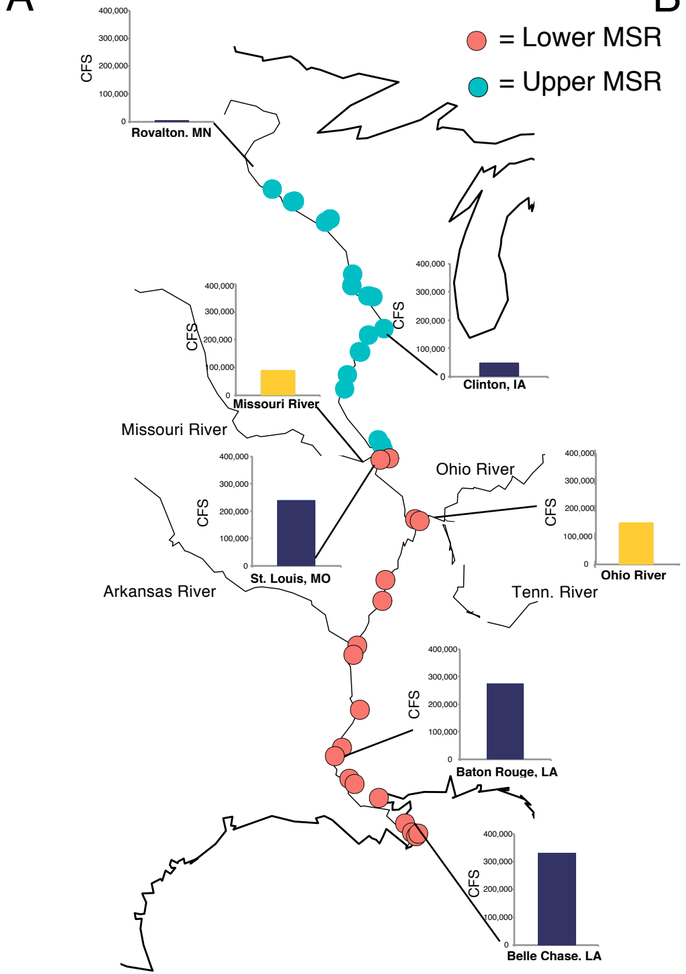
Figure Legends

Figure 1. Sampling map (A) with graph inserts that represent the measured discharge rate (cubic feet second^{-1} [CFS]) as recorded on the USGS gauges, and six environmental parameters measured along the transect, according to concentration or visible depth of secchi disk by distance (B). Throughout the figure and text, blue and red dots represent sampling locations above and below the Missouri River confluence, respectively, and are designated throughout as “Upper” and “Lower.” Cell Counts only represent the < 2.7 μm fraction. C) An OAR Northwest rowboat dwarfed by a paddleboat.

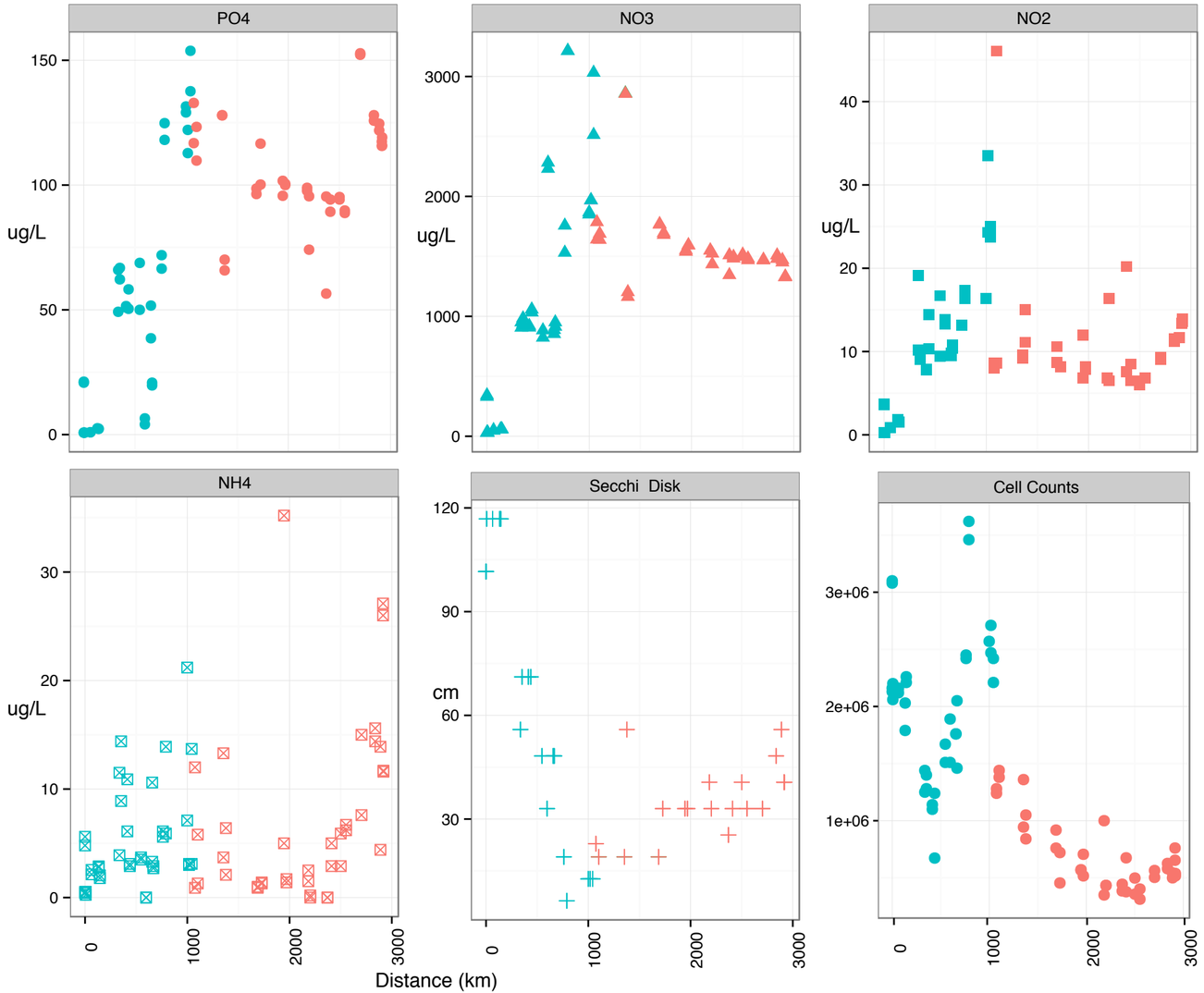
987 **Figure 2.** Non-metric multidimensional scaling (NMDS) results for whole
988 community correlations with environmental parameters (phosphate, nitrate,
989 nitrite, ammonia, distance (km), water temperature, turbidity (cm), river
990 speed (mph)) and the top ten OTUs based on significance (P) and strength
991 of correlation (r). The four plots represent > 2.7 μm (A, C) and 0.2-2.7 μm
992 (B, D) fractions for the 16S (A, B) and 18S (C, D) rRNA gene communities.
993 Vector length is proportional to the strength of the correlation.
994 **Figure 3.** Relative abundance, by phylum, according to transect distance, for
995 phyla accounting for > 0.1% of the total reads for the 16S rRNA gene > 2.7
996 μm (A) and 0.2-2.7 μm (B) communities. Non-linear regressions with 95%
997 CI (gray shading) are provided for reference.
998 **Figure 4.** Core microbiome aggregate abundance for the 16S (A) and 18S (B)
999 rRNA gene. In each, triangles and circles points represent 0.2-2.7 μm and
1000 > 2.7 μm fractions, respectively. Non-linear regressions with 95%
1001 confidence intervals (CI) (gray shading) are provided for reference.
1002 **Figure 5.** Relative abundance, by phylum, according to transect distance, for
1003 phyla accounting for > 0.1% of the total reads for the 18S rRNA gene > 2.7
1004 μm (A) and 0.2-2.7 μm (B) communities. Non-linear regressions with 95%
1005 CI (gray shading) are provided for reference.
1006 **Figure 6.** PLS results for the 0.2-2.7 μm 16S rRNA gene community for selected
1007 submodules with nitrate and phosphate and a VIP score > 1. Correlation of
1008 submodule OTUs to nitrate (A) and phosphate (B), according to the
1009 number of co-correlations (node centrality). Circle size is proportional to
1010 VIP scores, with top 10 VIP scoring and top node centrality OTUs labeled
1011 with their highest-resolution taxonomic classification and OTU number.
1012 Colors represent the taxonomic classification the phylum level.
1013 **Figure 7.** PLS results for the > 2.7 μm 16S rRNA gene community for selected
1014 submodules with nitrate and phosphate and a VIP score of > 1. Correlation
1015 of submodule OTUs to nitrate (A) and phosphate (B), according to the
1016 number of co-correlations (node centrality). Circle size is proportional to
1017 VIP scores, with top 10 VIP scoring and top node centrality OTUs labeled
1018 with their highest-resolution taxonomic classification and OTU number.
1019 Colors represent the taxonomic classification the phylum level.
1020 **Figure 8.** PLS results for the 0.2-2.7 μm 16S rRNA gene community for selected
1021 submodules with nitrate and phosphate and a VIP score of > 1. Correlation
1022 of submodule OTUs to nitrate (A) and phosphate (B), according to the
1023 number of co-correlations (node centrality). Circle size is proportional to
1024 VIP scores, with top 10 VIP scoring and top node centrality OTUs labeled
1025 with their highest-resolution taxonomic classification and OTU number.
1026 Colors represent the taxonomic classification the phylum level.
1027 **Figure 9.** PLS results for the > 2.7 μm 18S rRNA gene community for selected
1028 submodules with nitrate and phosphate and a VIP score of > 1. Correlation
1029 of submodule OTUs to nitrate (A) and phosphate (B), according to the
1030 number of co-correlations (node centrality). Circle size is proportional to

1031 VIP scores, with top 10 VIP scoring and top node centrality OTUs labeled
1032 with their highest-resolution taxonomic classification and OTU number.
1033 Colors represent the taxonomic classification the phylum level.

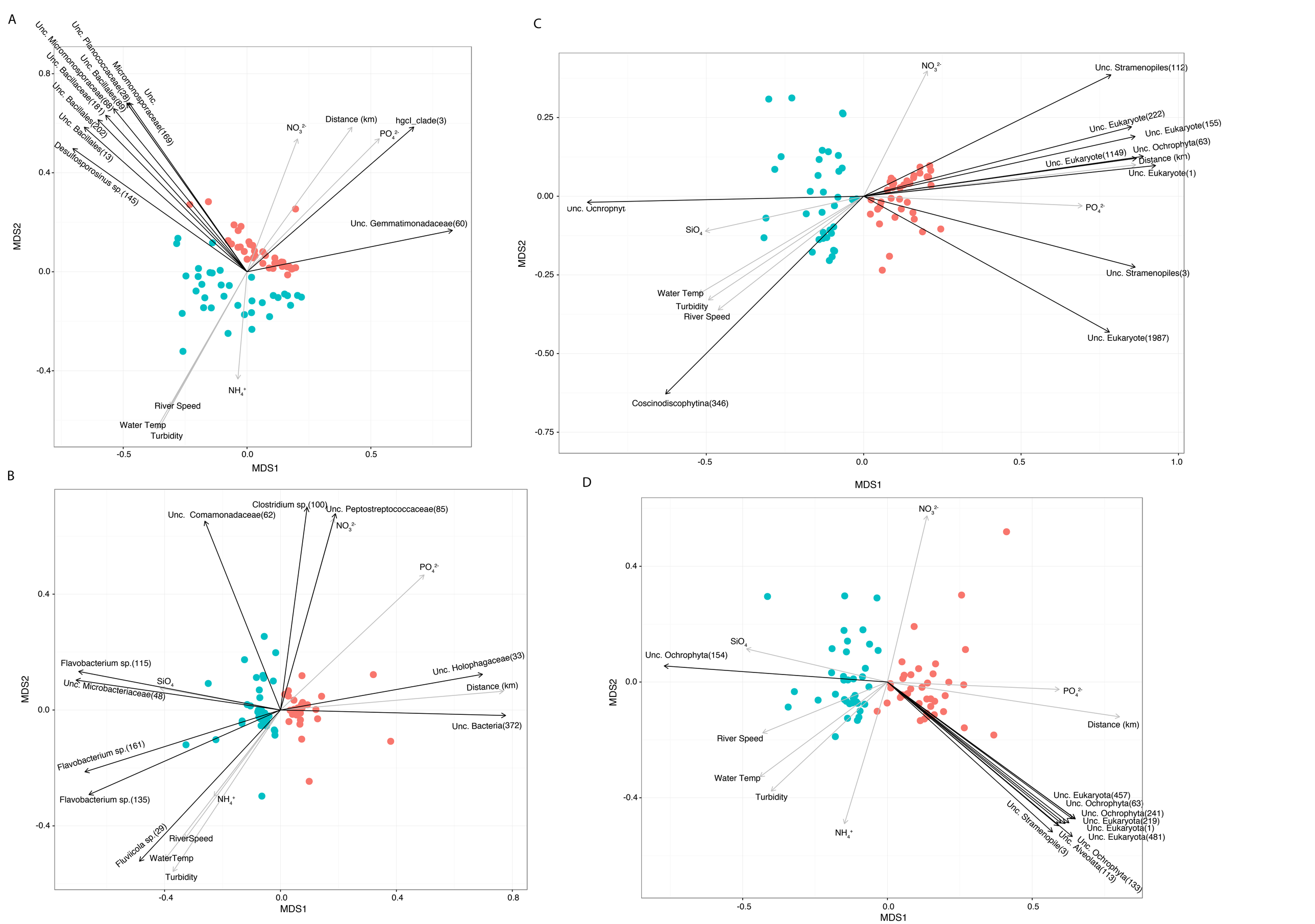
A


= Lower MSR
= Upper MSR
CFS
Rovalton. MN
Clinton, IA
Missouri River
Missouri River
Ohio River
Ohio River
St. Louis, MO
Arkansas River
Tenn. River
Baton Rouge, LA
Belle Chase. LA

B


PO4
NO3
NO2
NH4
Secchi Disk
Cell Counts
ug/L
cm
Distance (km)

C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Unc. Planococcaceae(28)
Unc. Bacillaceae(68)
Unc. Bacillales(89)
Micromonosporaceae(169)
Unc. Bacillaceae(181)
Unc. Bacillales(202)
Unc. Bacillales(13)
Desulfosporosinus sp.(145)
Distance (km)
hgcI_clade(3)
Unc. Gemmatimonadaceae(60)
River Speed
Water Temp
Turbidity
MDS1
MDS2
B
Clostridium sp.(100)
Unc. Comamonadaceae(62)
Unc. Peptostreptococcaceae(85)
Flavobacterium sp.(115)
Unc. Microbacteriaceae(48)
Unc. Holophagaceae(33)
Distance (km)
Unc. Bacteria(372)
Flavobacterium sp.(161)
Flavobacterium sp.(135)
Fluviicola sp.(29)
RiverSpeed
WaterTemp
Turbidity
MDS1
MDS2
C
Unc. Stramenopiles(112)
Unc. Eukaryote(222)
Unc. Eukaryote(155)
Unc. Ochrophyta(63)
Unc. Eukaryote(1149)
Distance (km)
Unc. Eukaryote(1)
Unc. Stramenopiles(3)
Unc. Eukaryote(1987)
Coscinodiscophytina(346)
Water Temp
Turbidity
River Speed
MDS1
MDS2
D
Unc. Ochrophyta(154)
Distance (km)
River Speed
Water Temp
Turbidity
Unc. Eukaryota(457)
Unc. Ochrophyta(63)
Unc. Ochrophyta(241)
Unc. Eukaryota(219)
Unc. Eukaryota(1)
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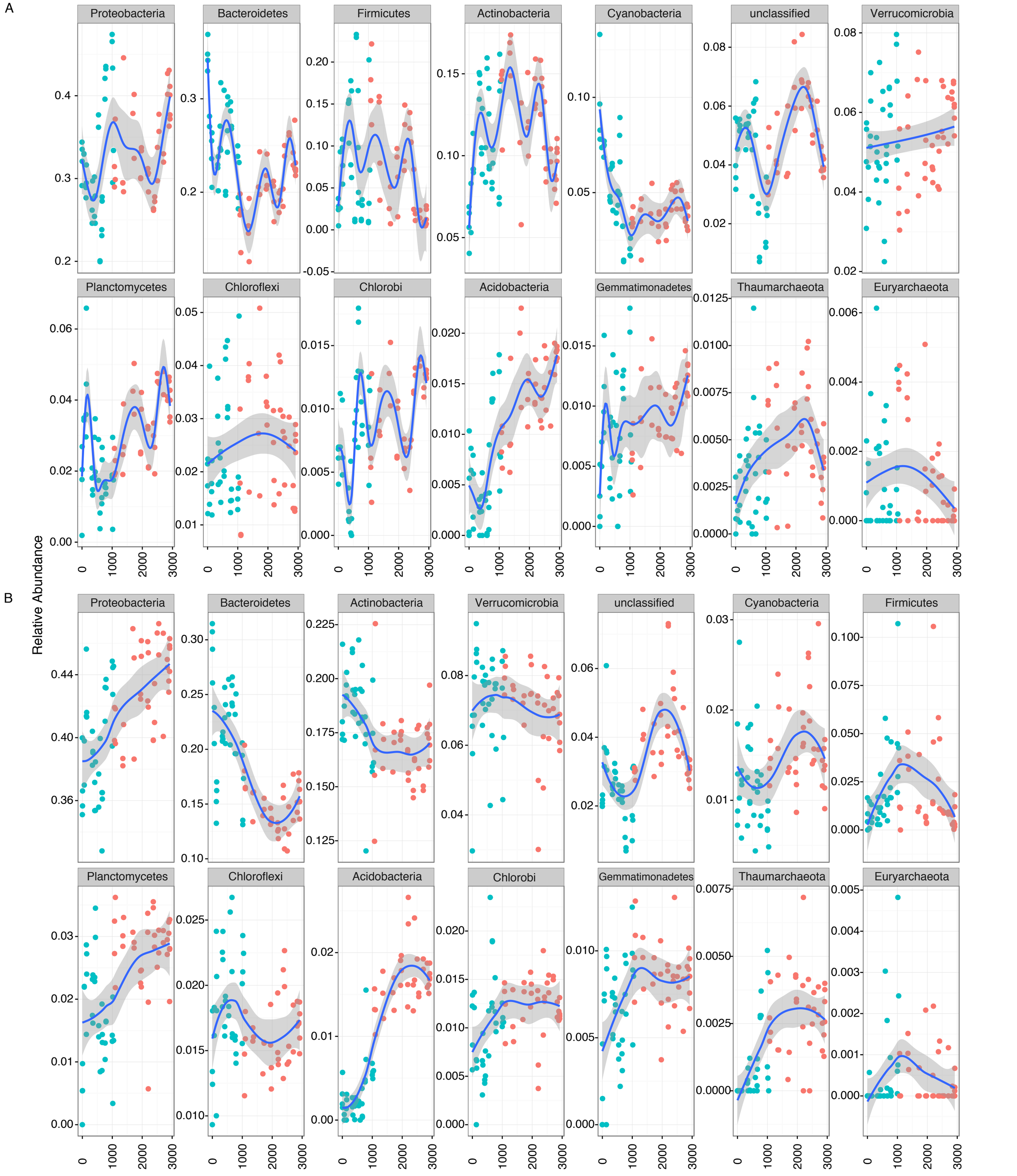
Unc. Alveolata(113)
Unc. Ochrophyta(133)
MDS1
MDS2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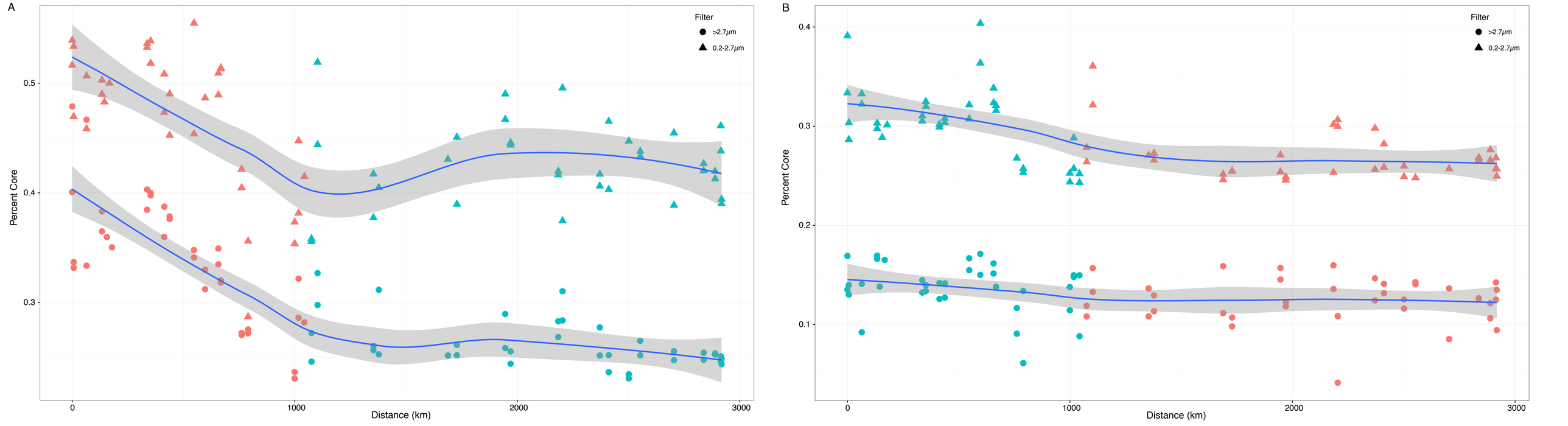
Proteobacteria
Bacteroidetes
Firmicutes
Actinobacteria
Cyanobacteria
unclassified
Verrucomicrobia
Planctomycetes
Chloroflexi
Chlorobi
Acidobacteria
Gemmatimonadetes
Thaumarchaeota
Euryarchaeota
B
Relative Abundance
0
1000
2000
3000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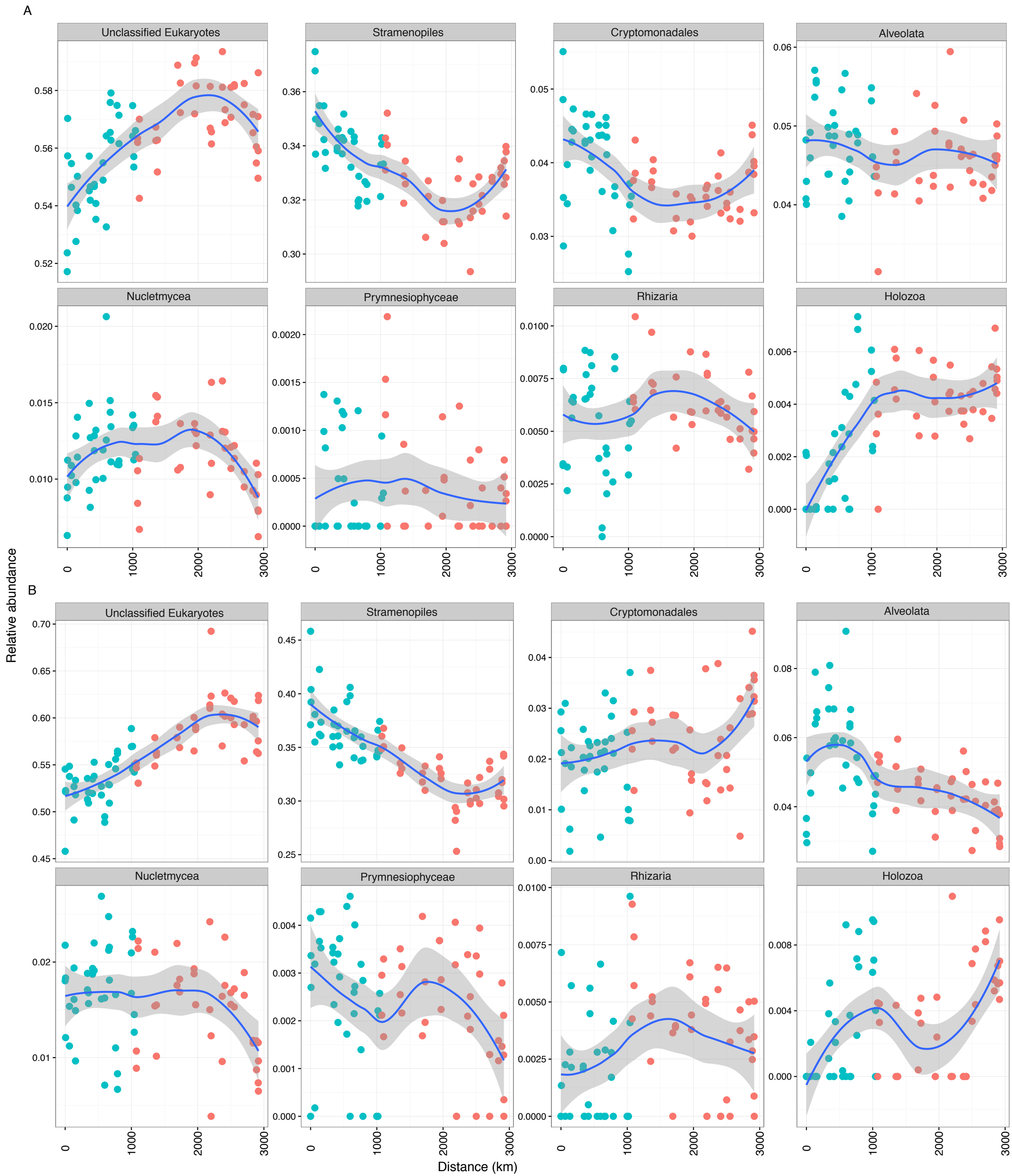
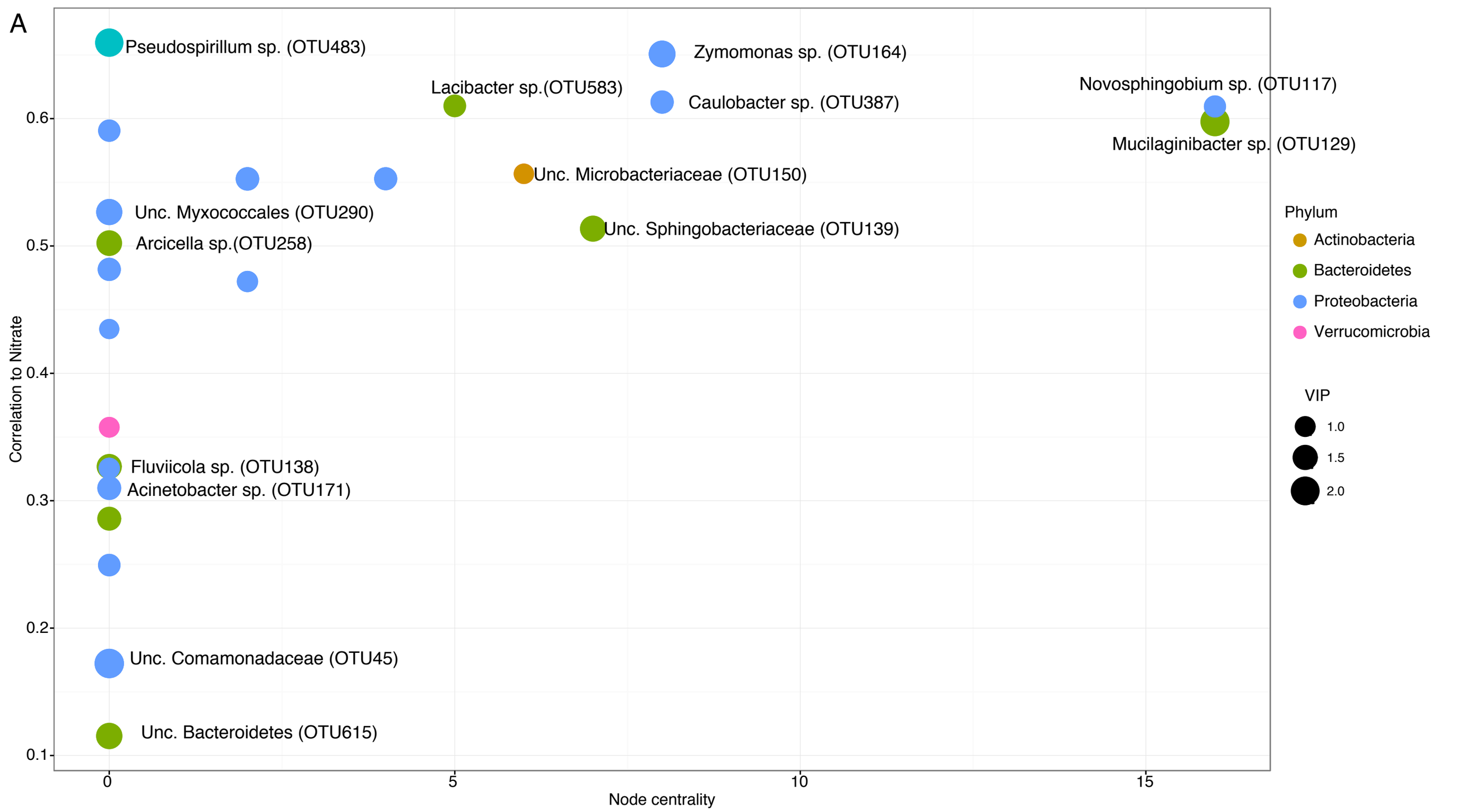
Filter
>2.7μm
0.2-2.7μm
Percent Core
0.5
0.4
0.3
0
1000
2000
3000
Distance (km)
B
Filter
>2.7μm
0.2-2.7μm
Percent Core
0.4
0.3
0.2
0.1
0
1000
2000
3000
Distance (km)


A
Unclassified Eukaryotes
Stramenopiles
Cryptomonadales
Alveolata
Nucletmycea
Prymnesiophyceae
Rhizaria
Holozoa
B
Unclassified Eukaryotes
Stramenopiles
Cryptomonadales
Alveolata
Nucletmycea
Prymnesiophyceae
Rhizaria
Holozoa
Relative abundance
Distance (km)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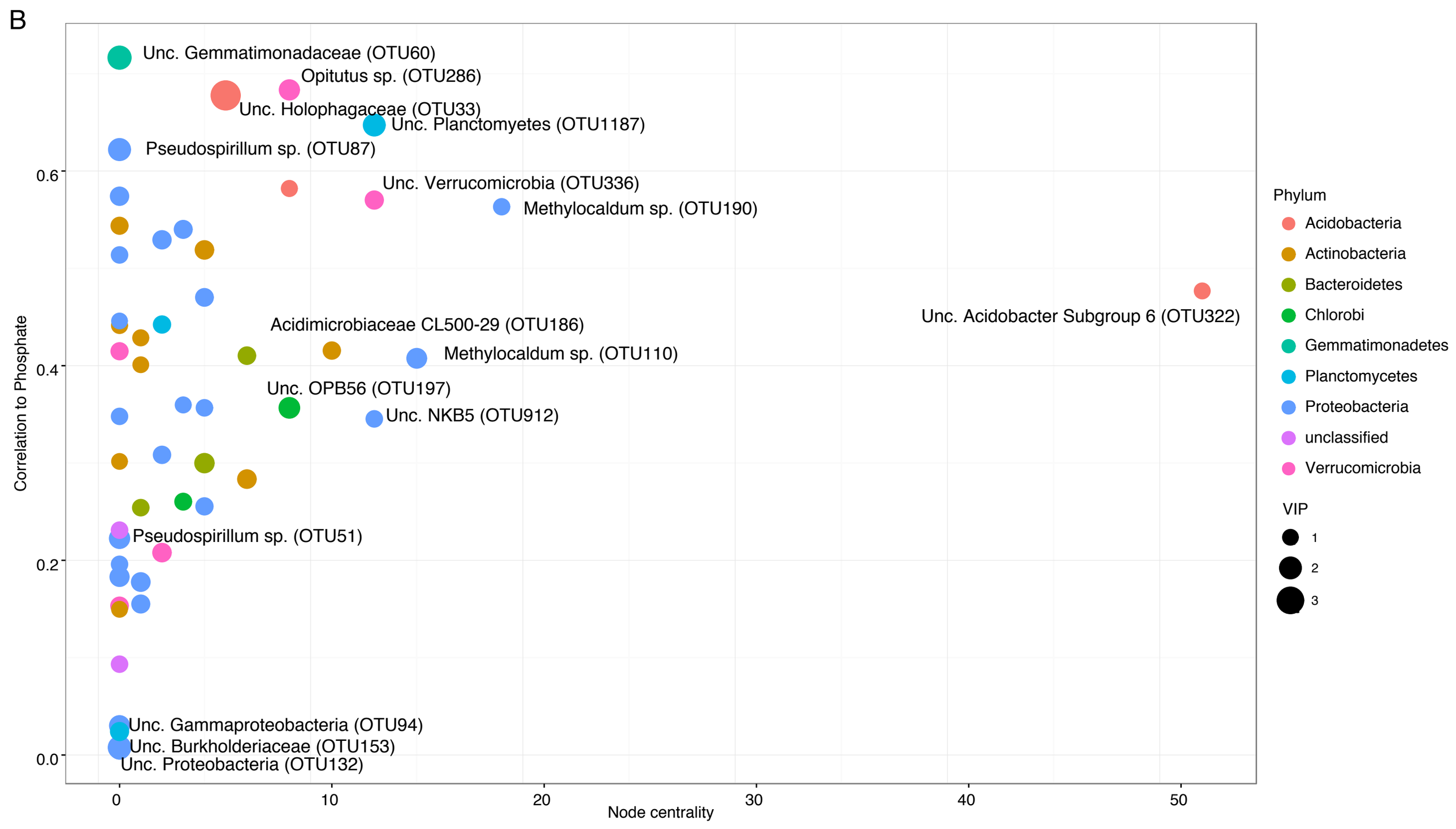
Pseudospirillum sp. (OTU483)
Zymomonas sp. (OTU164)
Lacibacter sp.(OTU583)
Caulobacter sp. (OTU387)
Novosphingobium sp. (OTU117)
Mucilaginibacter sp. (OTU129)
Unc. Microbacteriaceae (OTU150)
Unc. Myxococcales (OTU290)
Unc. Sphingobacteriaceae (OTU139)
Arcicella sp.(OTU258)
Fluviicola sp. (OTU138)
Acinetobacter sp. (OTU171)
Unc. Comamonadaceae (OTU45)
Unc. Bacteroidetes (OTU615)
Correlation to Nitrate
0.6
0.5
0.4
0.3
0.2
0.1
0
5
10
15
Node centrality
Phylum
Actinobacteria
Bacteroidetes
Proteobacteria
Verrucomicrobia
VIP
1.0
1.5
2.0


B
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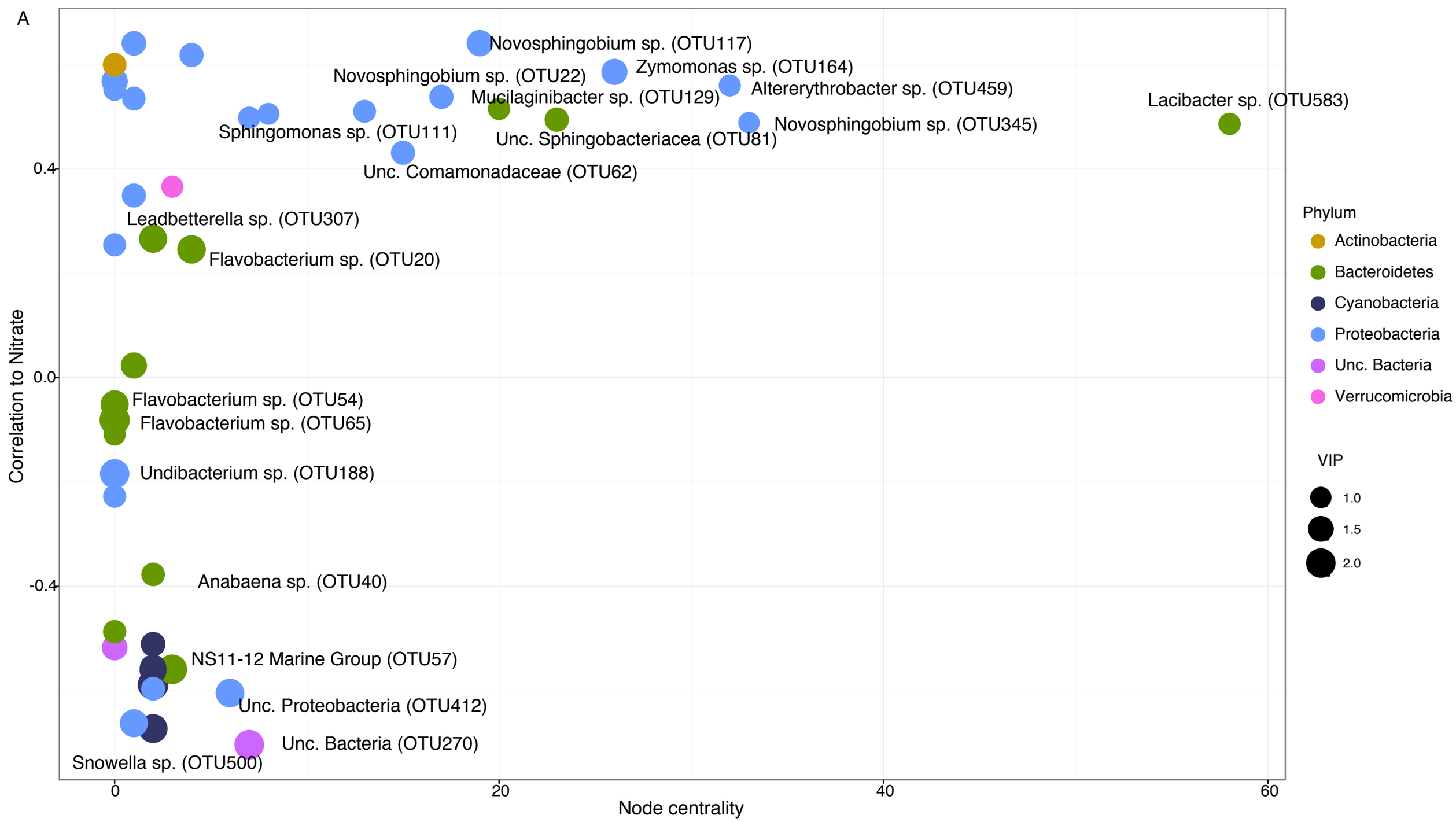
Opitutus sp. (OTU286)
Unc. Holophagaceae (OTU33)
Unc. Planctomyetes (OTU1187)
Pseudospirillum sp. (OTU87)
Unc. Verrucomicrobia (OTU336)
Methylocaldum sp. (OTU190)
Unc. Acidobacter Subgroup 6 (OTU322)
Acidimicrobiaceae CL500-29 (OTU186)
Methylocaldum sp. (OTU110)
Unc. OPB56 (OTU197)
Unc. NKB5 (OTU912)
Pseudospirillum sp. (OTU51)
Unc. Gammaproteobacteria (OTU94)
Unc. Burkholderiaceae (OTU153)
Unc. Proteobacteria (OTU132)
Correlation to Phosphate
0.6
0.4
0.2
0.0
0
10
20
30
40
50
Node centrality
Phylum
Acidobacteria
Actinobacteria
Bacteroidetes
Chlorobi
Gemmatimonadetes
Planctomycetes
Proteobacteria
unclassified
Verrucomicrobia
VIP
1
2
3

A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Novosphingobium sp. (OTU22)
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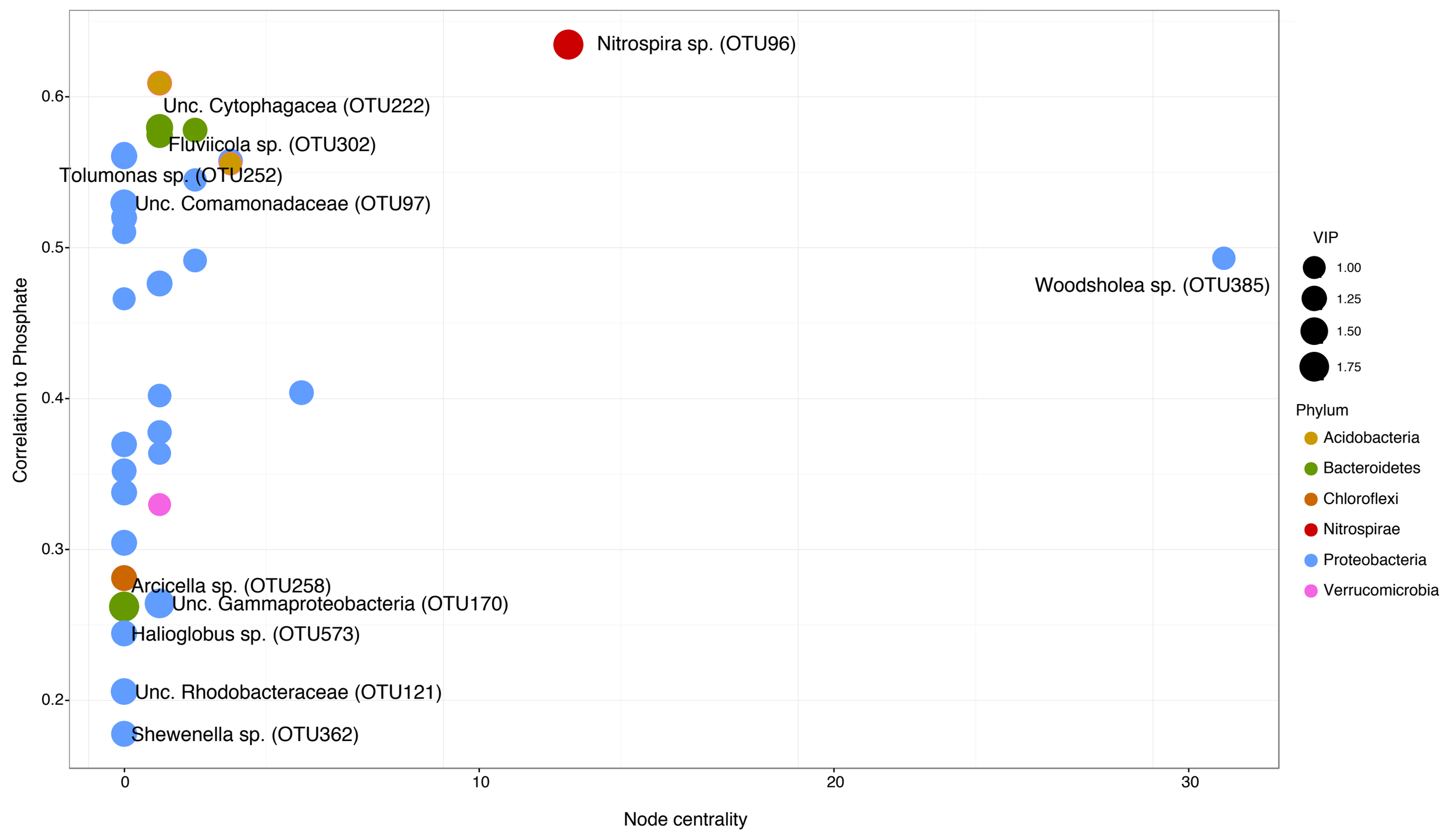
Mucilaginibacter sp. (OTU129)
Lacibacter sp. (OTU583)
Sphingomonas sp. (OTU111)
Novosphingobium sp. (OTU345)
Unc. Sphingobacteriacea (OTU81)
Unc. Comamonadaceae (OTU62)
Leadbetterella sp. (OTU307)
Flavobacterium sp. (OTU20)
Flavobacterium sp. (OTU54)
Flavobacterium sp. (OTU65)
Undibacterium sp. (OTU188)
Anabaena sp. (OTU40)
NS11-12 Marine Group (OTU57)
Unc. Proteobacteria (OTU412)
Unc. Bacteria (OTU270)
Snowella sp. (OTU500)
Correlation to Nitrate
0.4
0.0
-0.4
0
20
40
60
Node centrality
Phylum
Actinobacteria
Bacteroidetes
Cyanobacteria
Proteobacteria
Unc. Bacteria
Verrucomicrobia
VIP
1.0
1.5
2.0

B


Nitrospira sp. (OTU96)
Unc. Cytophagacea (OTU222)
Fluviicola sp. (OTU302)
Tolumonas sp. (OTU252)
Unc. Comamonadaceae (OTU97)
Woodsholea sp. (OTU385)
Arcicella sp. (OTU258)
Unc. Gammaproteobacteria (OTU170)
Halioglobus sp. (OTU573)
Unc. Rhodobacteraceae (OTU121)
Shewenella sp. (OTU362)
Correlation to Phosphate
0.6
0.5
0.4
0.3
0.2
0
10
20
30
Node centrality
VIP
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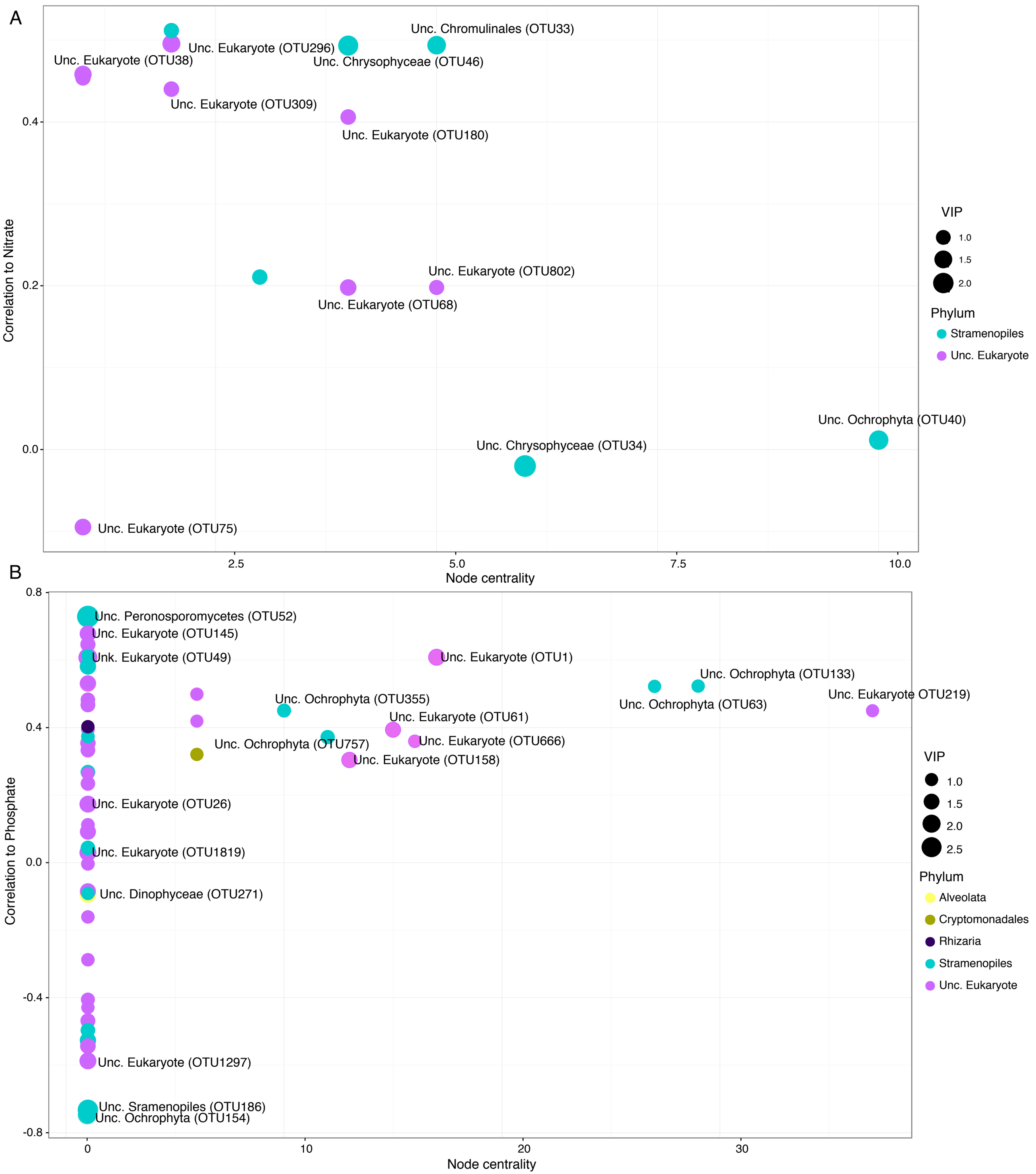
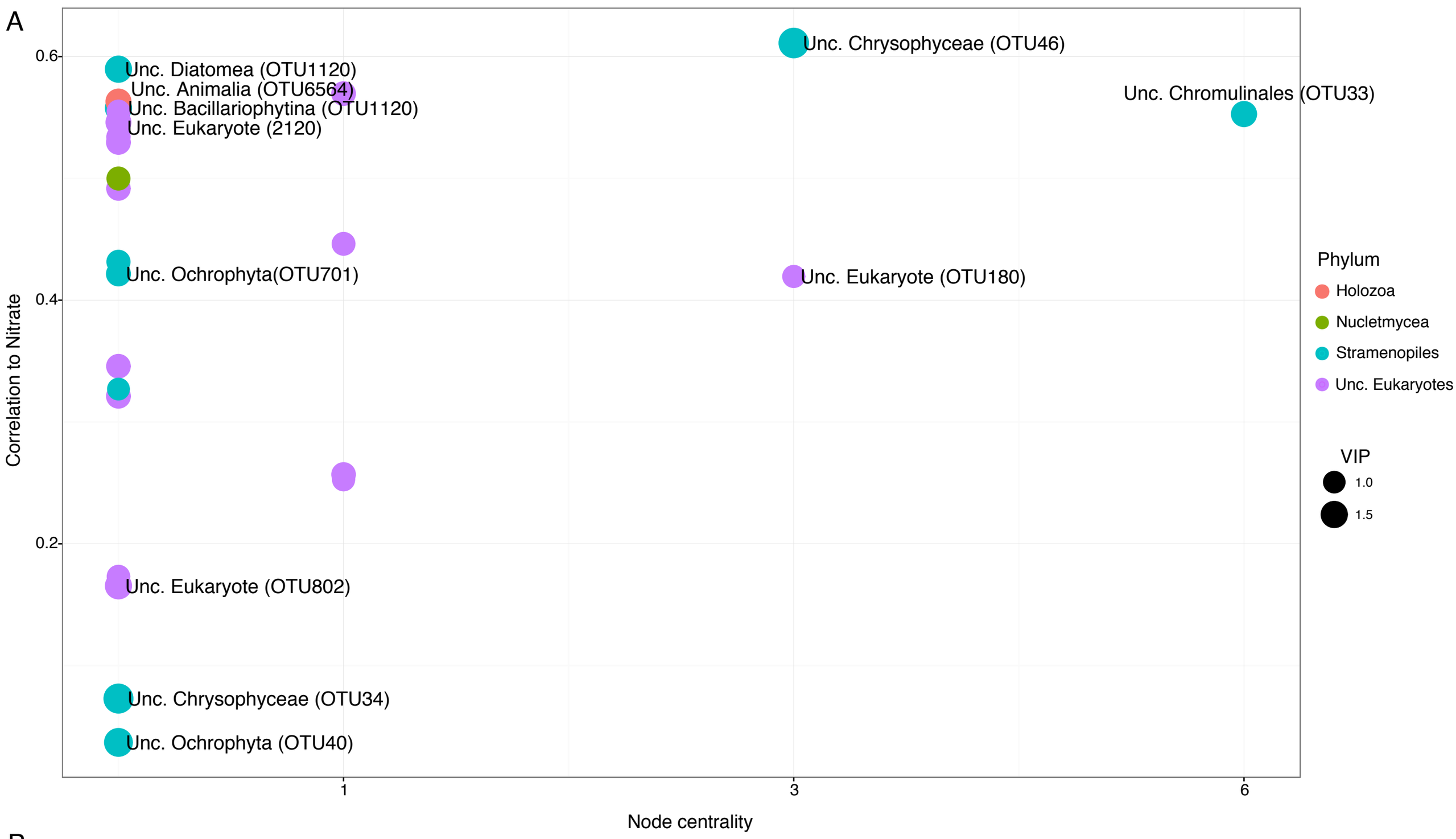
1.25
1.50
1.75
Phylum
Acidobacteria
Bacteroidetes
Chloroflexi
Nitrospirae
Proteobacteria
Verrucomicrobia


A
Unc. Chromulinales (OTU33)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU296)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU38)
Unc. Chrysophyceae (OTU46)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU309)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU180)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU802)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU68)
Unc. Ochrophyta (OTU40)
Unc. Chrysophyceae (OTU34)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU75)
Correlation to Nitrate
0.4
0.2
0.0
2.5
5.0
7.5
10.0
Node centrality
VIP
1.0
1.5
2.0
Phylum
Stramenopiles
Unc. Eukaryote
B
Unc. Peronosporomycetes (OTU52)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU145)
Unk. Eukaryote (OTU49)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU1)
Unc. Ochrophyta (OTU133)
Unc. Ochrophyta (OTU63)
Unc. Eukaryote OTU219)
Unc. Ochrophyta (OTU355)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU61)
Unc. Ochrophyta (OTU757)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU666)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU158)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU26)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU1819)
Unc. Dinophyceae (OTU271)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU1297)
Unc. Sramenopiles (OTU186)
Unc. Ochrophyta (OTU154)
Correlation to Phosphate
0.8
0.4
0.0
-0.4
-0.8
0
10
20
30
Node centrality
VIP
1.0
1.5
2.0
2.5
Phylum
Alveolata
Cryptomonadales
Rhizaria
Stramenopiles
Unc. Eukaryote

A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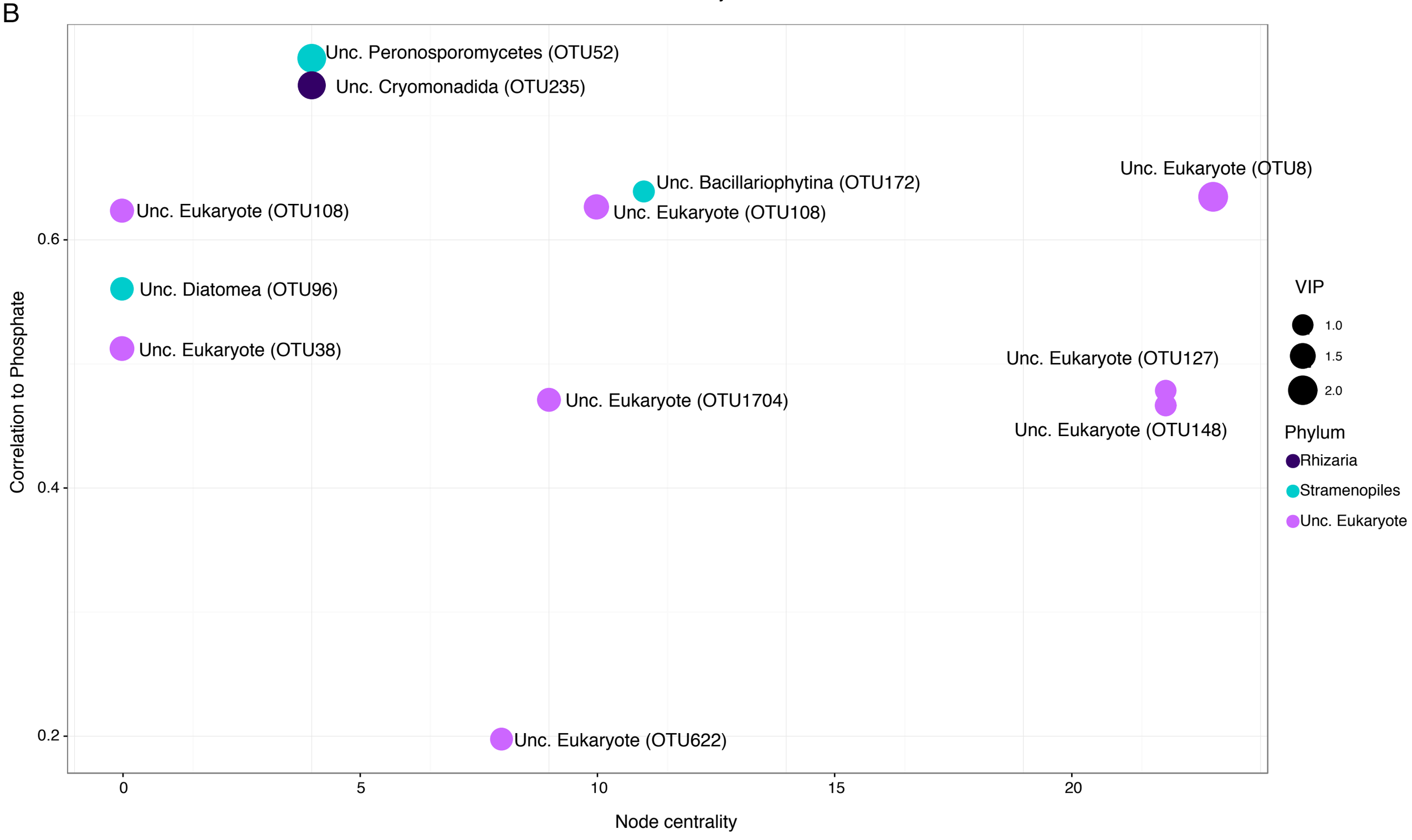
Unc. Animalia (OTU6564)
Unc. Bacillariophytina (OTU1120)
Unc. Eukaryote (2120)
Unc. Chromulinales (OTU33)
Unc. Ochrophyta(OTU701)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU180)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU802)
Unc. Chrysophyceae (OTU34)
Unc. Ochrophyta (OTU40)
0.6
0.4
0.2
Correlation to Nitrate
1
3
6
Node centrality
Phylum
Holozoa
Nucletmycea
Stramenopiles
Unc. Eukaryotes
VIP
1.0
1.5

B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Unc. Eukaryote (OTU8)
Unc. Bacillariophytina (OTU172)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU108)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU108)
Unc. Diatomea (OTU96)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU38)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU127)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU1704)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU148)
Unc. Eukaryote (OTU622)
0.6
0.4
0.2
Correlation to Phosphate
0
5
10
15
20
Node centrality
VIP
1.0
1.5
2.0
Phylum
Rhizaria
Stramenopiles
Unc. Eukaryote