



1 **Cultivable, halotolerant ice nucleating bacteria and fungi in coastal precipitation**

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18 **Abstract**

19 Ice nucleating particles (INPs) are a rare subset of aerosol particles that initiate cloud
20 droplet freezing at temperatures above the homogenous freezing point of water (-38 °C).
21 Considering that the ocean covers 70% of the earth's surface and represent a large potential
22 source of INPs, it is imperative that the uncertainties in the identities and emissions of ocean INP
23 become better understood. However, the specific underlying drivers of marine INP emissions
24 and their identities remain largely unknown due to limited observations and the challenge
25 involved in isolating exceptionally rare IN forming particles. By generating nascent sea spray
26 aerosol (SSA) over a range of biological conditions, mesocosm studies show that microbes can
27 contribute to marine INPs. Here, we identify 14 (30%) cultivable halotolerant ice nucleating
28 microbes and fungi among 47 total isolates recovered from precipitation and aerosol samples
29 collected in coastal air in Southern California. IN isolates collected in coastal air were found to
30 nucleate ice from extremely warm to moderate freezing temperatures (-2.3 to -18 °C). Air mass
31 trajectory analyses, and cultivability in marine growth media indicate marine origins of these



32 isolates. Further phylogenetic analysis confirmed that at least two of the 14 IN isolates were of
33 marine origin. Moreover, results from cell washing experiments demonstrate that most IN
34 isolates maintained freezing activity in the absence of nutrients and cell growth media. This
35 study provides confirmation of previous studies' findings that implicated microbes as a potential
36 source of marine INPs and additionally demonstrates links between precipitation, marine aerosol
37 and IN microbes.

38 **1 Introduction**

39 Ice nucleating particles (INPs) are rare aerosols (1 in 10^5 or less of total particles in the free
40 troposphere) (Rogers et al., 1998) that induce freezing of cloud droplets at temperatures above the
41 homogenous freezing point of water ($-38\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$) and at relative humidities (RH) well below the
42 homogenous freezing RH of aqueous solution droplets. They affect multiple climate-relevant
43 properties of mixed-phase and cold clouds. For example, in-cloud INP distributions can influence
44 the ice-phase partitioning processes that determine a cloud's reflectivity, lifetime and precipitation
45 efficiency (Creamean et al., 2013; DeLeon-Rodriguez et al., 2013; Fröhlich-Nowoisky et al., 2016;
46 Ladino et al., 2016). However, numerical representations of cloud ice processes challenge climate
47 models across all scales (Curry et al., 2000; Furtado and Field, 2017; Kay et al., 2016; Klein et al.,
48 2009; Prenni et al., 2007), and it is believed that the under-characterization of global INP
49 distributions contribute to the relevant uncertainties.

50 Despite recent evidence that sea spray aerosol (SSA) represents a unique source of INPs
51 (DeMott et al., 2016; McCluskey et al., 2016, 2018a, 2018b), that these INPs can contribute
52 significantly to total INP populations (particularly in remote marine regions where terrestrial
53 aerosols are less abundant) (Burrows et al., 2013; Vergara-Temprado et al., 2017; Vergara-
54 Temprado et al., 2018), and that specific parameterization of marine INPs can influence modelled



55 radiative budgets (Wilson et al., 2015), little is known about the actual entities involved in forming
56 marine INPs. (Schnell and Vali, 1975) were the first to associate phytoplankton blooms with raised
57 ice nucleation activity, in seawater sampled shortly after a bloom in Bedford Basin, Nova Scotia.
58 Recent mesocosm studies have linked SSA ice nucleating (IN) activity specifically to the death
59 phase of phytoplankton blooms. (McCluskey et al., 2017) showed that increases in INP emissions
60 corresponded to increased emissions of heterotrophic bacteria and organic species in SSA,
61 implicating microbes and biomolecules as contributors to marine INP populations. Marine
62 microbes were further linked to INPs in (McCluskey et al., 2018a): subsets of INPs in nascent SSA
63 were found to be heat labile, with sizes greater than 0.2 μm , and INP emissions correlated to
64 increased emissions of cells or cellular material. An IN halotolerant strain of *Pseudomonas*
65 *fluorescens* was detected in phytoplankton cultures derived from seawater (Fall and Schnell,
66 1985), and INPs have also been detected in seawater containing marine diatoms, green algae
67 (Alpert et al., 2011; Junge and Swanson, 2007; Ladino et al., 2016; Parker et al., 1985), and sea-
68 ice samples containing marine Antarctic bacteria (Junge and Swanson, 2007; Parker et al., 1985).

69 While indirect evidence indicates marine microbes and other biogenic entities as possible
70 marine INPs, direct observations of any marine IN entity in the atmosphere (i.e. through isolation
71 and identification in an atmospheric sample) were previously nonexistent. Multiple factors make
72 it difficult to determine INP origin, including the low abundance of INPs and the diversity of
73 aerosols with IN ability (e.g. Kanji et al., 2017). Moreover, it is not always possible to differentiate
74 terrestrial and marine air mass influences within the Marine Boundary Layer (MBL). However,
75 cultivable IN microbes have been isolated from clouds and precipitation for decades (e.g. Sands et
76 al., 1982; Failor et al., 2017; Morris et al., 2008), and the origins of IN isolates can be determined
77 by comparing sequences with reference isolates of known origin. There are several caveats to



78 consider when inferring in-cloud INP concentrations or properties from precipitation samples
79 (Petters and Wright, 2015), including “sweep-out” of additional INPs as the hydrometeor traverses
80 the atmosphere below the cloud (Vali, 1974). However, previous studies have derived estimates
81 of in-cloud INP concentrations and origins from the concentrations and identities of IN microbes
82 from ground-level collections (Christner et al., 2008; Failor et al., 2017a; Joyce et al., 2019;
83 Monteil et al., 2014) by assuming that particles in precipitation originate from the cloud rather than
84 the atmospheric column through which the hydrometeor descended. This assumption is supported
85 by (Vali, 1971), which found that subcloud scavenging of aerosol did not affect INPs observed in
86 precipitation collected at the surface in comparisons of INP spectra from surface samples with
87 samples collected at cloud-base. Furthermore, (Wright et al., 2014) estimated that sweep-out
88 contributed between 1.2 and 14% of INPs suspended in a precipitation sample collected at the
89 surface.

90 While evidence exists for relationships between IN microbes and precipitation in terrestrial
91 systems, studies of the relationship between marine INPs, marine microbes, and precipitation
92 remain quite limited. Here we report the identities and freezing temperatures of 14 cultivable
93 halotolerant IN species derived from coastal precipitation and aerosol samples, two of which were
94 marine in origin. Over the course of 11 precipitation events during an El Niño season, 47 cultivable
95 halotolerant bacteria and fungi were recovered from aerosol and precipitation samples collected in
96 a coastal subtropical climate in southern California. Bacterial and fungal species were isolated,
97 identified, and tested for ice nucleation behavior from 0 to -25 °C using an immersion mode droplet
98 freezing assay technique. Precipitating cloud altitudes and isolate source regions were estimated
99 using the High-Resolution Rapid Refresh atmospheric model (HRRR) and the FLEXible



100 PARTicle dispersion model (FLEXPART)(Stohl et al., 1998), respectively. Finally, the effect of
101 media on the observed IN behavior of isolates was investigated through cell washing experiments.

102 **2 Methods**

103 *2.1 Precipitation and Aerosol Sample Collection Methods*

104 Precipitation and ambient aerosol samples were collected on the Ellen Browning Scripps
105 Memorial Pier at Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO) (32.8662 °N, 117.2544 °W) from
106 March 6, 2016 – May 6, 2016. Sampling took place in the surf 8 m above Mean Lower Low Water
107 (MLLW), and samples were only collected during westerly winds. Aerosol samples were collected
108 over 1.5-5 hour periods on polycarbonate filters (45 mm diameter, 0.2 µm pore-size, Whatman®
109 Nuclepore, Chicago, Illinois, USA) placed in open-face Nalgene ® Analytical Filter Units
110 (Waltham, Massachusetts, USA). After collection, aerosol filters were immersed in 12 mL of
111 ultrapure water, and particles were shaken off the filter by hand for 20 minutes. The precipitation
112 samples were collected using a modified Teledyne Isco© Full-Size Portable Sampler (Lincoln,
113 Nebraska, USA), fitted with 24 1-L polypropylene bottles. Prior to sampling, the bottles were
114 immersed in 10 % hydrogen peroxide for 10 minutes, then rinsed three times with ultrapure water.
115 The automated sampler would engage when triggered by precipitation of at least 0.13 cm h⁻¹ and
116 would sample using the first of 24 bottles for 30 minutes, and thereafter switch bottles at hourly
117 intervals. Within one to two hours of sample collection, INP concentrations were measured using
118 the SIO-Automated Ice Spectrometer (SIO-AIS) (Beall et al., 2017), an automated offline freezing
119 assay technique for measurement of immersion mode INPs. To decrease the effect of interstitial
120 particle sweep out by falling raindrops on measured INP concentration, precipitation from the first
121 30 minutes was discarded. Sweep out effects have been estimated to contribute between 1.2 and
122 14 % to measured concentrations of INP in a precipitation sample (Wright et al., 2014).



123 The INP measurement technique is described in detail in (Beall *et al.*, 2017). Briefly, the
124 precipitation samples were distributed in microliter aliquots into a clean 96-well disposable
125 polypropylene sample tray. An equal number and volume of aliquots of ultrapure water accompany
126 each sample in the disposable tray as control for contamination from the loading and/or ultrapure
127 water. The sample trays were then inserted into an aluminum block that is cooled until the samples
128 are frozen. Cumulative INP number concentrations per temperature per volume are calculated
129 using the fraction (f) of unfrozen wells per given temperature interval:

130

$$131 \quad INP = \frac{-\ln(f)}{V_d} \quad \text{Eq. (1)}$$

132

133 where V_d is the volume of the sample in each well. For aerosol filter samples, cumulative INP
134 number concentrations are calculated using the ratio of the volume used for resuspension of the
135 particles (V_{re}) to the volume of aerosol sampled (V_A):

$$136 \quad INP = \frac{-\ln(f) \cdot V_{re}}{V_d \cdot V_A} \quad \text{Eq. (2)}$$

137

138 The fraction of unfrozen wells (f) is adjusted for contamination by subtracting the number of frozen
139 ultrapure water wells per temperature interval from both the total number of unfrozen wells and
140 total wells of the sample. For this study, 30 x 50 μL droplets were deposited into the droplet assay,
141 yielding a detection limit of 0.675 INP mL^{-1} liquid.

142 Within one to two hours of collection, precipitation and aerosol samples were also
143 inoculated in 5 mL ZoBell growth media (ZoBell, 1947) (5 g peptone, 1 g yeast extract per 1 L of
144 filtered (0.22 μm) autoclaved seawater) and grown under ambient conditions (21 - 24 $^{\circ}\text{C}$). INP
145 concentrations in ZoBell enrichments were measured 1-day post inoculation and for several days
146 thereafter to monitor for sustained IN activity.



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148 *2.2 Bacterial and fungal isolation and characterization*

149 Precipitation and SSA microorganisms were cultivated using the ZoBell enrichment
150 described above (ZoBell, 1947) (Fisher Scientific, Houston, Texas, USA). Isolation was performed
151 by successive plating on ZoBell agar (BD Bacto™ Agar, Sparks, MD, USA). Liquid cultures were
152 inoculated from single colonies and grown to late exponential phase. DNA was extracted from
153 liquid cultures of isolates after an overnight lysis with proteinaseK (100 µg mL⁻¹) and lysozyme
154 (5 mg mL⁻¹) (MilliporeSigma, Burlington, Massachusetts, USA) (Boström et al., 2004) using a
155 QIAamp® kit (QIAGEN, Hilden, Germany). 16S V4 ribosomal DNA fragments were amplified
156 using the primers 515F (5′ GTGYCAGCMGCCGCGGTAA 3′) and 926R (5′
157 CCGYCAATTCMTTTRAGT 3′)(Walters et al., 2015). PCR products were purified using
158 GenElute™ PCR Clean-up kit (MilliporeSigma). 16S fragment DNA sequences were resolved by
159 Sanger sequencing (Retrogen, San Diego, CA). OTUs were determined from 16S sequences using
160 SINA (Pruesse et al., 2012) and individual sequences were inspected using BLAST
161 (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>) for further characterization.

162 To assess for duplicate isolates within the sampling period, 16S sequences were
163 compared. Sequences within the same OTU were adjusted and aligned in
164 DECIPHER(Alignseqs(), AdjustAlignment() with default settings) (Wright, 2015). These
165 sequence alignments were used to generate phylogenetic trees using ClustalW2
166 (UPGMA)(McWilliam et al., 2013) and visualized with iTOL(Letunic and Bork, 2011). Branch
167 distances were used to evaluate sequence similarity. To facilitate comparisons between
168 organisms assigned to the same OTU, identity assignments including divisions at distances > 0.1
169 (e.g. 1, 2, 3...) were further subdivided by distances > 0.01 (e.g. 1a, 1b, 1c...). Nonzero distances



170 < 0.01 were given sub labels (e.g. 1a1, 1a2...). Zero distances were given identical labels.
171 Distances < 0.01 were determined to be possible duplicates if they were collected during the
172 same sampling period unless the organisms had a different phenotype generally indicated by
173 different pigmentation. Each duplicate was tested for its IN ability, and the results are reported in
174 Table S1 and discussed in the main text. Maximum likelihood phylogenetic trees were computed
175 in MEGA7 (Tamura et al., 2013) after ClustalW alignment with reference sequences
176 (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>).

177

178 *2.3 Storm and aerosol source characterization methods*

179 Cloud altitudes at the time of precipitation sample collection were estimated using the
180 High-Resolution Rapid Refresh model (HRRR). The altitudes and pressure levels of clouds were
181 assumed to be located where RH was > 95-100 % in the model. The specific RH criteria applied
182 to each sampling period are provided in Table S2. HRRR model output was compared with surface
183 RH measurements from the SIO pier weather station during sampling periods, and predicted RH
184 was found to agree with observations with an RMSE of < 10 – 15%, which aligns closely with
185 previously reported RH accuracies over the continental US (Benjamin et al., 2016). Three altitudes
186 of the estimated cloud top, middle and bottom were used as release points of FLEXPART 10-day
187 LaGrangian backward trajectories. Back-trajectories were used to identify potential sources of
188 INPs in the precipitation samples, and to indicate potential sources of land-based contamination in
189 aerosol and precipitation samples due to local wind patterns or land-sea breezes. Satellite
190 composites from the National Weather Service Weather Prediction Center’s North American
191 Surface Analysis Products were used for synoptic weather analysis to generally characterize
192 meteorology during each rain event (see Table S3).



193 2.4 *Isolate IN activity measurement and controls*

194 To measure the IN activity of each isolate, liquid cultures were grown to late exponential
195 phase. Growth was monitored by optical density (OD) (590 nm). INP concentrations were
196 measured as described in Sect. 2.1 in liquid cultures and compared to a ZoBell blank as a control.
197 Isolate biomass was estimated from OD measurements using the distribution of OD to biomass
198 conversion factors from (Myers et al., 2013). As Myers et al. (2013) found, in a study of 17
199 diverse organisms, OD to biomass conversion factors ranged between 0.35 and 0.65 gDW OD⁻¹
200 L⁻¹; we assume that INP g⁻¹ biomass may be estimated from OD within a factor of 2. Thus,
201 isolate INP concentrations, and upper and lower limits of 95% confidence intervals were scaled
202 by $\frac{1}{m}$, where m is the mean, minimum or maximum value of the (Myers et al., 2013) biomass
203 conversion factor distribution, respectively (i.e. 0.5, 0.65 and 0.35 gDW OD⁻¹ L⁻¹).

204 To investigate the effect of growth media on IN isolates, a subset of late exponential
205 cultures were washed three times with filtered (0.22 μm) autoclaved seawater (FASW) by
206 successive centrifugation and resuspension. The washing procedure removes everything that is
207 water soluble and whole cells and insoluble molecules pellet upon centrifugation. INP
208 measurements were taken as described and compared to sterile seawater controls (see Fig. S1b and
209 Fig. S1c).

210 As ZoBell growth media contained INPs at moderate to cold freezing temperatures (-13 to
211 -25 °C, see Fig. S1a), only isolates exhibiting INPs at significantly higher freezing temperatures (-
212 2.3 to -15 °C) or at significantly higher concentrations than their respective ZoBell growth media
213 sample were considered to be IN. The criterion for significance was chosen to be conservative: a
214 data point along an isolate's measured IN spectrum was considered significant if there was no
215 overlap between the 95 % binomial sampling confidence interval of the given data point (Agresti



216 and Coull, 1998) and any ZoBell confidence interval within ± 2.2 °C, the maximum uncertainty in
217 freezing temperature measurement due to heterogeneity in heat transfer rates across the
218 instrument's droplet assay (Beall et al., 2017). This equates to a significance threshold of $p < 0.005$
219 (Krzywinski and Altman, 2013). The choice of ± 2.2 °C is likely conservative given that in a study
220 of 11 cooling cycles, the average and maximum ΔT observed across the droplet assay when cooling
221 from 0 to -25 °C was 0.38 and 0.98 °C, respectively (and following this study, the addition of a
222 second thermistor under the second sample tray decreased the observed ΔT to within thermistor
223 uncertainty, ± 0.2 °C). The same criterion was applied to isolates washed and suspended in FASW
224 as described above (Figs. S1 b-c). Many isolates were diluted with their respective media (ZoBell
225 or FASW) to decrease opacity such that freezing events could successfully be detected by the
226 camera, so their respective dilution factors were applied to both the INP concentrations measured
227 in the isolate suspension and the INP concentrations measured in the FASW or ZoBell samples for
228 the significance analysis (see Figs. S1 b-c and S2).

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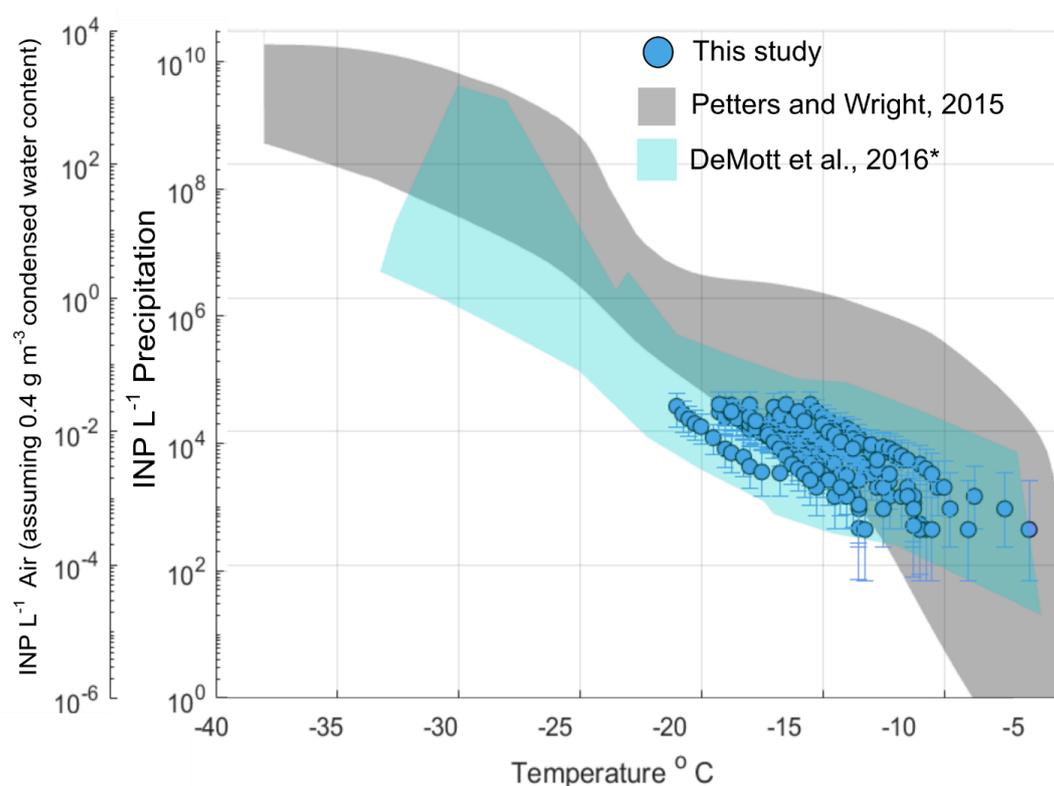
230 **3 Results and discussion**

231 *3.1 Subtropical coastal storm properties and origins*

232 Aerosol and rain samples were collected from a pier on the coast of La Jolla, CA
233 ($32^{\circ}52'01.4''N$ $117^{\circ}15'26.5''W$) during an El Niño event spanning 11 precipitation sampling
234 periods March 6 to May 7, 2016. Observations of INPs in precipitation generally fall within bounds
235 of previously reported INP concentrations from precipitation and cloud water samples (Fig. 1, grey
236 shaded region, adapted from Petters and Wright, 2015). AIS measurement uncertainties are
237 represented with 95% binomial sampling intervals (Agresti and Coull, 1998). Observed freezing
238 temperatures ranged from -6.5 to -22.0 °C, with concentrations up to the limit of testing at 10^5 INP



239 L^{-1} precipitation. Following the assumptions in (Petters and Wright, 2015) to estimate in-cloud
240 INP concentrations from precipitation samples (i.e. condensed water content of 0.4 g m^{-3} air),
241 observations of INP concentrations in fresh precipitation samples are additionally compared to
242 studies of field measurements conducted in marine and coastal environments.



243

244 **Figure 1. INP concentrations per liter precipitation and estimated in-cloud INP**
245 **concentrations per volume of air in 11 precipitation samples collected at Scripps Institution**
246 **of Oceanography Ellen Browning Scripps Memorial Pier (32.8662 °N, 117.2544 °W, La**
247 **Jolla, California, USA) between March and May 2016.** Grey shaded region indicates the
248 spectrum of INP concentrations reported in nine previous studies of precipitation and cloud
249 water samples collected from various seasons and locations worldwide, adapted from Fig. 1 in
250 (Petters and Wright, 2015). The blue shaded region represents the composite spectrum of INP
251 concentrations observed in a range of marine and coastal environments including the Caribbean,
252 East Pacific and Bering Sea as well as laboratory-generated nascent sea spray (DeMott et al.,
253 2016).

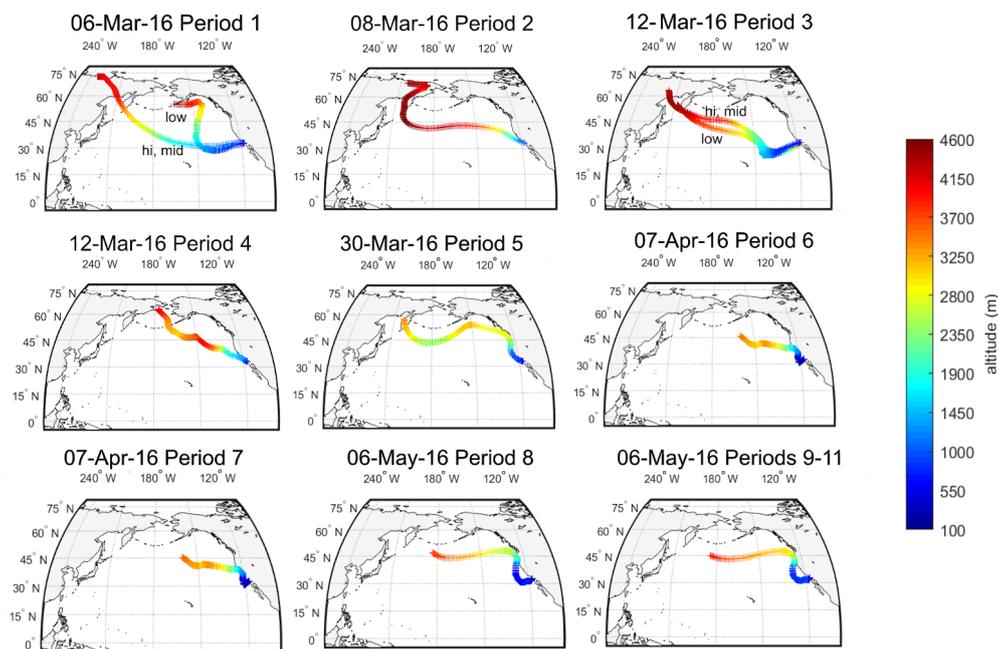
254 *DeMott et al., 2016 data has been updated with a completed dataset for the ICE-T study, as
255 shown in (Yang et al., 2020).



256 Figure 1 shows that atmospheric INP concentration estimates compare with INP
257 concentrations observed in a range of marine and coastal environments, including the Caribbean,
258 East Pacific, and Bering Sea, as well as laboratory-generated nascent sea spray aerosol (DeMott et
259 al., 2016). Observations of INPs in aerosol samples are shown in Fig. S3 and are also comparable
260 with those of DeMott et al. (2016).

261 The source regions of aerosols present in precipitating clouds were estimated using 10-day
262 FLEXPART back trajectories (Fig. 2). For each of the 11 sampling periods, back trajectories show
263 that the Pacific Ocean from mid to high latitudes was the primary source region to precipitating
264 cloud layers. Periods 5 – 11 may have been additionally influenced by west coast continental
265 sources (particularly periods 6 and 7). 10-day back trajectory simulations for aerosol samples
266 similarly indicated that marine sources dominated (see Fig. S4). Marine aerosols likely originated
267 from regions near the coast (Periods 2, 4-11, A1, A2, A5) or in the mid Pacific Ocean (Periods 1
268 and 3), where trajectories descended below the marine boundary layer.

269 Cloud bottom and top altitudes were estimated using the High-Resolution Rapid Refresh
270 model (HRRR), defined by the RH criteria in Table S2. Over the 11 precipitation sampling periods,
271 cloud altitude ranged from 950 – 600 mb, bottom to top, or 500 – 4000 m, with temperatures
272 ranging from 265 – 288 K.



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Figure 2. 10-day back-trajectories from cloud base, mid-cloud, and cloud-top during 11 precipitation sampling periods at the SIO Pier (32.8662 °N, 117.2544 °W). FLEXPART back-trajectories were used to estimate potential source regions of INPs to the clouds during precipitation events. Shown are the particle centroids of back-trajectories from three release altitudes within each cloud (see Table S2 for details on altitude selection criteria). If trajectories across the three selected release altitudes differentiated, they are labeled “hi” for cloud top, “mid” for halfway between base and top, and “low” for cloud bottom. Origins of particles in the 10-day simulation are shown to range from 4000 m over Russia to 2500 – 3500 m over the Sea of Okhotsk, the Bering Sea, and the north Pacific. FLEXPART results suggest a dominance of marine particle sources to clouds for sampling periods 1-11.

3.2 Bacterial and fungal taxonomy

288 Cultivable bacteria and fungi were enriched from rain and aerosol samples in marine
289 bacterial growth media, and strains were further isolated on marine agar. This resulted in 34
290 isolates from rain samples, and 13 isolates from aerosol samples with 29 unique operational
291 taxonomic units (OTUs) as determined by > 97 % sequence identity of 16S sequences (Table



292 S1). Many of the isolates derived from rain and aerosol were highly pigmented, as observed in
293 other studies (Delort et al., 2017; Fahlgren et al., 2010, 2015; Hwang and Cho, 2011; Tong and
294 Lighthart, 1997), presumably aiding their survival under high *uv* exposure (Fig. S5). This
295 pigmentation was especially prevalent in rain samples. The higher number of precipitation-
296 derived isolates compared to aerosol is likely the result of lower aerosol bacterial and fungal
297 loads during rain events. INP concentration decreases in aerosol during precipitation events
298 support this conclusion. For 3 of the 11 precipitation events featured in this study (see Fig. S6),
299 INP concentrations in aerosol were measured immediately before, during, and after precipitation
300 events. In each of the three events, INP concentrations in aerosol decreased below detection
301 levels during precipitation and increased again soon after the end of the precipitation event (in
302 under 24 hours), though not beyond concentrations observed prior to the precipitation event.
303 Interestingly, these features (i.e. the observed decreased INP concentrations during precipitation
304 events and absence of increased INP concentrations within 24 hours of precipitation events) are
305 in opposition to multiple studies of INP concentrations during and after rainfall events in
306 terrestrial systems (Bigg, 1958; Conen et al., 2017; Huffman et al., 2013; Prenni et al., 2013).
307 Additionally, (Levin et al., 2019) observed an increase in INP concentrations after precipitation
308 events in a coastal environment, though this increase may have been related to a shift from
309 marine to terrestrial aerosol sources as indicated by the back trajectories. Thus, results in this
310 study indicate that the positive feedbacks between rainfall and surface INP emissions observed in
311 terrestrial systems (Bigg et al., 2015; Morris et al., 2017) may not always apply to marine
312 environments.

313 The taxonomy of the aerosol and rain isolates show higher diversity in the precipitation
314 samples (Fig. S7 and Table S1), which may be due to artificial biases from low aerosol isolate



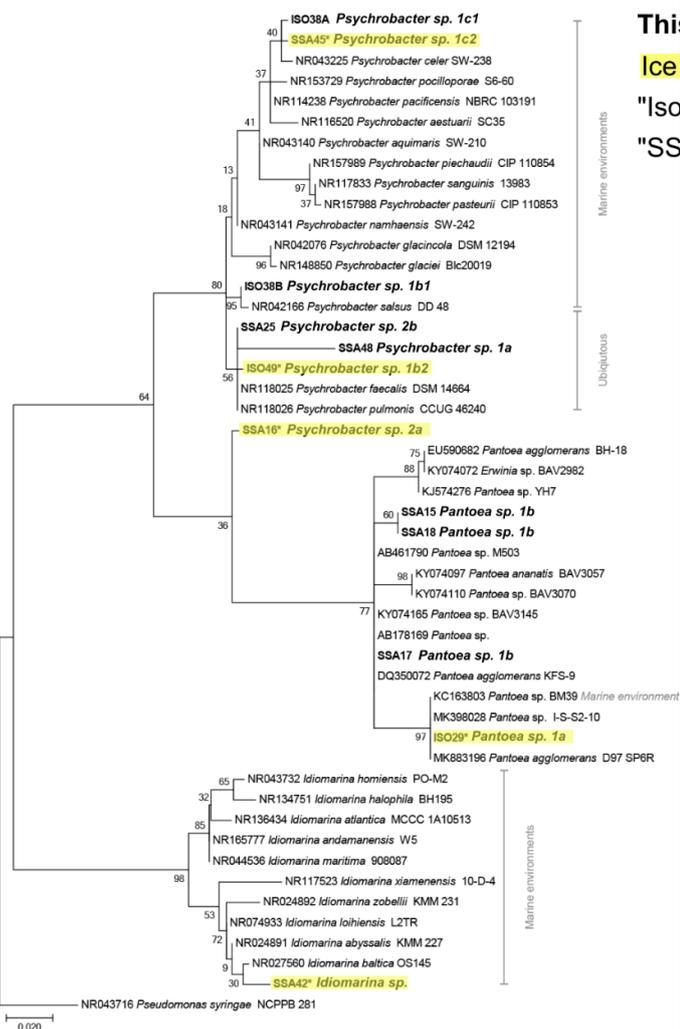
315 recovery or sweep out of interstitial particles during raindrop descent. The rain samples had a
316 high proportion of Actinobacteria, whereas in aerosol, Firmicutes and Proteobacteria were more
317 dominant.

318 The microbes isolated in our study are closely related to microbial communities described
319 in other studies, despite being isolated from a warmer climate (Bowers et al., 2009; Fröhlich-
320 Nowoisky et al., 2016; Santl-Temkiv et al., 2015; Väitilingom et al., 2012). As (Michaud *et al.*,
321 2018) showed, Actinobacteria, as well as select Proteobacteria and Firmicutes, have an increased
322 ability to aerosolize from seawater, and so SSA emissions may also explain their presence here.
323 Two isolates (one from rain and one from aerosol, 3.5% of total isolates) are related to *Pantoea*
324 sp., strains of which are known to possess IN proteins (e.g., Hill et al., 2014). *Pantoea* sp. and
325 *Psychrobacter* sp. were the only bacterial taxa identified previously known to possess ice
326 nucleation activity (Hill et al., 2014; Ponder et al., 2005). However, both *Psychrobacter* sp. and
327 *Idiomarina* sp. have been shown to be capable of inhibiting ice recrystallization, possibly
328 through the production of antifreeze proteins (AFPs) which can both inhibit freezing at moderate
329 temperatures and serve as INPs at colder temperatures (Wilson and Walker, 2010).

330 The phylogenetic relationships between isolates and reference sequences (Fig. 3)
331 indicate that marine origin is highly likely for two of the 14 IN isolates, *Idiomarina* sp. and
332 *Psychrobacter* sp. 1c2, both of which were derived from coastal aerosol. Additionally,
333 considering the aerosol transport simulation data (Fig. 2), the evidence of marine influence in
334 precipitation INP spectra (Fig. 1), and the use of marine growth media, multiple other IN isolates
335 derived from the precipitation samples are also possibly marine. Furthermore, other IN isolates
336 from precipitation samples cluster closely with marine reference sequences. For example,
337 *Pantoea* sp.1a and *Brevibacterium* sp. show high similarity to reference sequences derived from



338 marine environments (Fig. 3 and S8). However, several of the species identified in this study are
339 likely more ubiquitous, and closely related to reference isolates found in terrestrial and
340 freshwater systems (Bowers et al., 2009; Fröhlich-Nowoisky et al., 2016; Santl-Temkiv et al.,
341 2015; Väitingom et al., 2012), including two of the IN isolates, *Psychrobacter* sp. 1b2 and
342 *Paenbacillus* sp. 1.
343



This study (bold)

Ice nucleating strains

"Iso": strain derived from precipitation

"SSA": strain derived from aerosol

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Figure 3. Phylogenetic relationships of isolates (in bold) related to Gamma-proteobacteria reference sequences. The environmental source of the reference sequences (based on NCBI metadata) is indicated in grey. Isolates with ice nucleating properties are shaded in yellow; bootstrap values (n=500) are indicated at nodes; scale bar represents changes per positions.

350 3.3 Ice Nucleating Properties of Rain and SSA isolates

351 Of the 47 total isolates derived from precipitation and aerosol samples, 14 were found to
 352 be significantly ice nucleating according to the selection criterion described in Methods Sect. 2.4.



353 Within the technique's temperature and detection limit of $0.675 \text{ INP mL}^{-1}$ liquid between 0 and -
354 $25 \text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$, 11 precipitation isolates exhibited freezing temperatures between -2.3 and $-24.3 \text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$, and 3
355 aerosol isolates exhibited freezing temperatures between -14.0 and $-24.5 \text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ (Table 1). Prior to
356 this study, *Lysinibacillus* sp. was the only known gram-positive species found to be capable of
357 ice nucleation (Failor et al., 2017a). Yet several IN isolates identified in this study are also
358 gram-positive, including isolates of *Brevibacterium* sp., *Paenibacillus* sp., *Planococcus* sp.,
359 *Bacillus* sp., *Arthrobacter* sp., and *Cellulosimicrobium* sp.

360 **Table 1.** Identities of 14 cultivable, halotolerant IN bacteria derived from aerosol or precipitation
361 samples (see Table S2 for precipitation and aerosol sample details).
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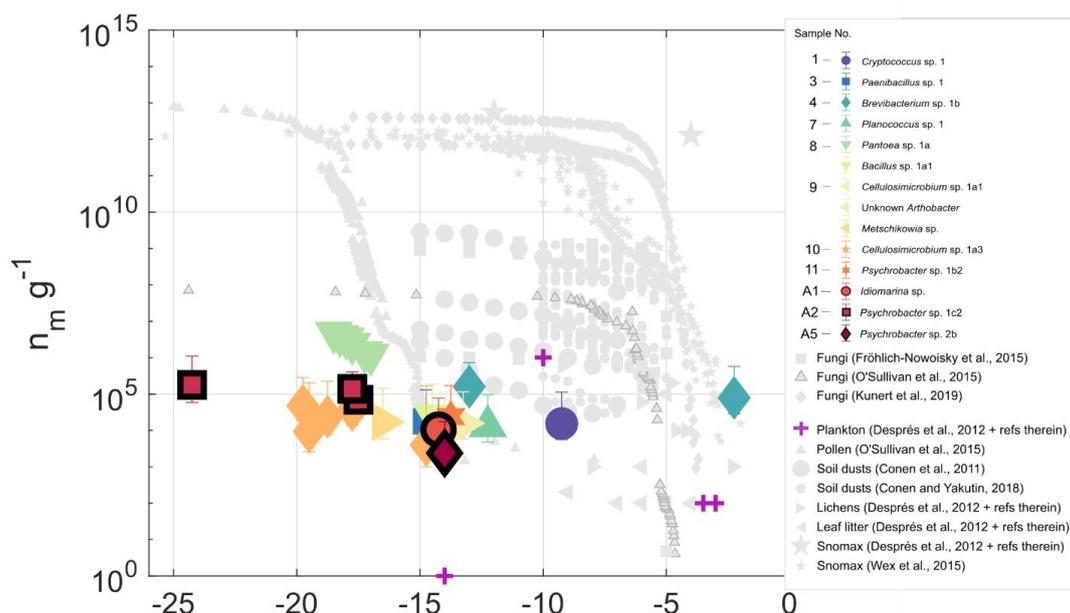
| IsoID | Isolate | IN Onset Temperature $^{\circ}\text{C}$ | Precipitation or Aerosol Sample Number |
|--------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Iso2 | <i>Cryptococcus</i> sp. 1 | -9.3 | 1 |
| Iso10B | <i>Paenibacillus</i> sp. 1 | -14.8 | 2 |
| Iso8 | <i>Brevibacterium</i> sp. 1b | -2.3 | 4 |
| Iso32B | <i>Planococcus</i> sp. 1 | -12.3 | 7 |
| Iso29 | <i>Pantoea</i> sp. 1a | -17 | 8 |
| Iso31 | <i>Bacillus</i> sp.1a1 | -14.5 | 8 |
| Iso21 | <i>Cellulosimicrobium</i> sp. 1a1 | -14 | 9 |
| Iso23 | Unknown <i>Arthrobacter</i> | -13.3 | 9 |
| Iso24A | <i>Metschikowia</i> sp. | -16.5 | 9 |
| Iso27 | <i>Cellulosimicrobium</i> sp. 1a3 | -14.8 | 10 |
| Iso49 | <i>Psychrobacter</i> sp. 1b2 | -13.8 | 11 |
| SSA42 | <i>Idiomarina</i> sp. | -14.3 | A1 |
| SSA16 | <i>Psychrobacter</i> sp. 1c2 | -17.5 | A2 |
| SSA45 | <i>Psychrobacter</i> sp. 2b | -14 | A5 |

363

364 Isolate INP spectra are shown in Fig. 4, normalized to biomass, $n_m \text{ g}^{-1}$ (see Sect. 2.4 for
365 details on biomass estimates). Also plotted in Fig. 4 are observations of a variety of marine and
366 terrestrial bioaerosols from prior studies, including pollens, fungi, lichens, plankton, leaf litter
367 and soil dusts (Conen et al., 2011; Conen and Yakutin, 2018; Després et al., 2012; Fröhlich-



368 Nowoisky et al., 2015; Kunert et al., 2019; O'Sullivan et al., 2015; Wex et al., 2015). Results
369 show that with the exception of *Brevibacterium* sp., isolates from this study are generally less
370 efficient than most terrestrial IN biological particles, with lower concentrations and activation
371 temperatures. Concentrations of INP per mL in ZoBell suspension are additionally shown in Fig.
372 S10.



373
374 **Figure 4.** INP concentrations (g^{-1} biomass) for 14 halotolerant isolates derived from precipitation
375 and aerosol samples. Also shown are INP observations of various biological particles from
376 published studies. Sample numbers in the legend indicate the precipitation or aerosol sample from
377 which the isolate was derived (see Table S3). Datapoints corresponding to isolates from aerosol
378 are outlined in black. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals and uncertainty associated with
379 biomass estimate (see Sect. 3.3 for details). Only freezing activity that was significantly enhanced
380 ($p < 0.005$) above ZoBell growth media is shown. Results show that with the exception of
381 *Brevibacterium* sp., isolates are generally less efficient ice nucleators than most biological INPs
382 of terrestrial origin.
383

384 To examine the IN properties of unique strains within samples, multiple sequence
385 alignment of the 16S sequences was used to identify and remove duplicates. The relationship



386 between 16S sequences of isolates within their OTUs is shown in Fig. S11. Ice nucleating
387 precipitation and aerosol isolates exhibit moderate IN freezing temperatures (< -10 °C) (Fig. 4),
388 with the exception of two warm freezing isolates: a fungal isolate from sampling period 1,
389 *Cryptococcus* sp., which triggered freezing at -9.3 °C, and a bacterial isolate from sampling period
390 4, *Brevibacterium* sp., at an exceptionally warm freezing temperature of -2.3 °C. The freezing
391 temperatures of all but *Brevibacterium* sp. 1b overlap with previously reported freezing
392 temperatures of INPs produced from fresh SSA (-7 to -33 °C), and, in particular, with the freezing
393 temperatures shown to be likely associated with microbes or cellular material in SSA (-8 to -22
394 °C). (DeMott et al., 2016; McCluskey et al., 2017). Isolate freezing temperatures also overlap with
395 INP freezing temperatures in samples of Arctic marine sea surface microlayer (Irish et al., 2017;
396 Wilson et al., 2015).

397 Considering that only IN microbes of continental origins, such as *Pseudomonas syringae*,
398 have been reported with freezing temperatures as high as -2 or -3 °C (e.g. Fröhlich-Nowoisky et
399 al., 2016 and references therein), and that SSA is associated with 1000 times fewer ice
400 nucleating active sites per surface area compared to mineral dust (McCluskey et al., 2018b), it
401 would be unexpected to find a marine IN isolate with an extremely warm freezing onset
402 temperature. However, the presence of bacteria closely related to the *Brevibacterium* sp. in
403 marine environments suggests that a marine origin is possible (Fig. S8, see also discussion in
404 Sect. 3.2). Furthermore, the backtrajectory analysis for the sample from which *Brevibacterium*
405 sp. was isolated indicates that North Pacific sources dominated the sampling period.
406 Actinobacteria are common in marine environments (e.g. Bull et al., 2005) and have been
407 identified in nascent SSA (Michaud et al., 2018).



408 To explore the role of the growth media on isolate IN properties, controls were run on nine
409 washed isolates (Fig. S1 and Table S4, see Methods Sect. 2.4). Five of the selected isolates were
410 found to not be significantly IN above sterile ZoBell background, while four were chosen from the
411 subset of significantly IN isolates. Interestingly, the observed INP concentrations of washed
412 isolates above that of the FASW were inconsistently related to activity when grown in ZoBell
413 media, and were generally enhanced. Seven of the nine media-free isolates exhibited significant
414 IN behavior, including 4 isolates that were not IN in ZoBell. Some of the observed differences in
415 ice nucleation above background between isolates suspended in ZoBell and those suspended in
416 FASW could be a result of the differences in the background INP concentrations present in the
417 suspension media (i.e. concentrations of INPs in FASW are less than in ZoBell, thus increasing
418 the temperature range in which IN activity could be detected). Another possibility is that the
419 isolates' IN behavior varied depending on multiple factors, including their viability, environment,
420 stress, and nutrient availability. As washing cells removes soluble molecules, the apparent IN
421 activity of washed suspensions could indicate that the source of IN activity is membrane-
422 associated, or alternatively, that expression of IN activity is sensitive to environmental factors. For
423 example, limited nutrient availability has been shown to enhance IN behavior of both
424 *Lysinibacillus* sp. and *P. syringae* sp. (Failor et al., 2017a; Nemecek-Marshall et al., 1993). The
425 difference in IN activity between ZoBell and FASW suspensions indicates that *in situ*
426 measurements of IN bacteria will be necessary to determine the abundance of active IN microbes
427 in the atmosphere.

428 Another limitation of the cultivation approach is that the concentrations of the IN species
429 in the precipitation samples from which we derived them are unknown. Considering that typically,
430 only a fraction of an IN isolate's cells are actively ice nucleating, even for highly efficient IN



431 microbes such as *P.syringae* (2-4%, Amato et al., 2015), concentrations of active IN microbes in
432 the precipitation samples were likely below the limit of detection (0.675 mL^{-1} , see Sect. 2.1). For
433 example, assuming a high active fraction of 2% and the maximum concentration of cultivable
434 microbes in precipitation observed in (Failor et al., 2017b, $\sim 22,000 \text{ L}^{-1}$), the concentration of
435 actively ice nucleating microbes equal 0.44 mL^{-1} , which is below the limit of detection.

436 One study of note (Failor *et al.*, 2017) used similar cultivation and INP measurement
437 techniques on precipitation samples. While Failor et al. (2017) did not report estimates of source
438 regions or claim marine origin of the IN microbes that were cultivable in marine growth media,
439 they report the presence and IN freezing temperatures of *Pseudomonas* sp. and *Pantoea* sp., both
440 of which were also found here (see also Fall and Schnell, 1985). Additionally, whereas (Failor *et*
441 *al.*, 2017) reports warm freezing temperatures between -4 and -12 °C for multiple *Pseudomonas*
442 sp. samples, none of the *Pseudomonas* sp. isolated in our study exhibited detectable IN activity.
443 Similarly, pseudomonads were common, but all lacked ice nucleation activity in rain and cloud
444 water samples collected on the coast of Scotland (Ahern et al., 2007). IN observations for *Pantoea*
445 sp. also differ. The *Pantoea* sp. isolate in our study exhibited a moderate IN freezing temperature
446 of -17 °C, but (Failor *et al.*, 2017) reports warm freezing activity between -4 and -10 °C.

447 Interestingly, Failor *et al.*'s (2017) results show discrepancies between IN behavior of
448 isolates directly plated from precipitation samples and those from suspensions of purified strains,
449 supporting our findings that IN behavior can vary between different isolate suspensions. (Failor et
450 al., 2017) suggests that changes in an isolate's IN activity may be explained in part by growth
451 conditions not conducive for the expression of INA, and that INA molecules might generally be
452 produced in higher amounts in oligotrophic conditions, like those found in the atmosphere. In
453 addition to environment-dependent changes in isolate IN activity, the differences between the two



454 studies could also be the result of inherent differences in IN activity between different strains of
455 the same species (Morris et al., 2008). Finally, whereas (Failor *et al.*, 2017) report only IN
456 Gammaproteobacteria that were cultivable in marine growth media, we find greater diversity among
457 the IN isolate taxonomies, including Actinobacteria, Bacilli, Saccharomycetes, and
458 Tremellomycetes.

459

460 **4 Conclusions**

461 Through isolation and identification of multiple IN microbes in precipitation and aerosol,
462 this study reveals two specific marine INP identities, *Idiomarina* sp. and *Psychrobacter* sp. 1c2,
463 confirming previous mesocosm studies' implication of marine microbes as INP candidates
464 (McCluskey et al., 2017, 2018a). Furthermore, we isolated six new IN gram-positive bacteria
465 capable of ice-nucleation, as prior to this study, *Lysinibacillus* sp. was the only gram-negative
466 species capable of ice nucleation (Failor et al., 2017). Additionally, through cell washing
467 experiments in which soluble molecules and growth media are eliminated from isolate
468 suspensions, we find that most isolates' IN activities are dependent on growth conditions.

469 Due to the challenge of distinguishing marine from terrestrial INPs in environmental
470 samples, it is impossible to definitively claim marine or terrestrial origins for 10 of the 14 IN
471 isolates featured in this study. In order to survive atmospheric transport and deposition through
472 rainwater, cultivable isolates derived from precipitation must be tolerant of near-freshwater
473 conditions. However, marine origins are possible for the following reasons: aerosol back-
474 trajectories and INP observations during sampling events indicate that marine sources were
475 dominant (Figs. 1-2), multiple isolate sequences show similarity to marine isolation sources in
476 reference sequences (Figs. 3, S8), and isolate freezing temperatures are generally in agreement



477 with previously documented nascent SSA IN freezing temperatures (DeMott et al., 2016;
478 McCluskey et al., 2017, 2018a).

479 While cultivation methods preclude quantification of atmospheric abundance and exclude
480 a large fraction of uncultivable microorganisms, we captured several possible contributors to
481 precipitation IN populations and through isolation maintained the ability to assess their IN
482 activity and other characteristics. Considering the general rarity of atmospheric INPs ($1 \text{ in } 10^5$ at
483 $-20 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$) (Rogers et al., 1998), the relatively lower concentrations of INPs in marine air masses
484 (DeMott et al., 2016; McCluskey et al., 2018c), and the rarity of cultivable microbes, it is quite
485 surprising that a substantial fraction of the cultivable microbial isolates from precipitation
486 samples were found to be IN at temperatures above $-17 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ (11 out of 34 total, or 32%), and
487 suggests that there are more – i.e., a significant fraction – of IN species in aerosols among the
488 substantially larger uncultivable community.

489 Finally, as cultivable populations represent a small fraction of the total microbial
490 community, future studies should combine INP measurements with state-of-the-art sequencing
491 approaches to better identify the putative IN microbes that may not be recovered by cultivation
492 techniques. Further study is also needed to understand the factors, such as atmospheric processing
493 or nutrient limitation, that inhibit or enhance microbe IN behavior, as well as the factors that
494 modulate the emissions of IN bacteria emission from the ocean surface.

495



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503

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518

519



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