

Table 1. Virus-like particle (VLP) abundance, prokaryotic abundance and virus-to-prokaryote ratio (VPR) values in different ecosystems.  $N$  = number of sites

Environment	Ecosystem type	VLP abundance (VA)		Prokaryotic abundance (PA)		VPR				
		Mean (min–max)	Unit	Mean (min–max)	Unit	Mean (min–max)	Unit			
Pelagic	Marine	$2.86 \times 10^7$ ( $3.00 \times 10^3$ – $7.92 \times 10^8$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	241	$2.16 \times 10^6$ ( $0.00$ – $6.90 \times 10^7$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	211	26.5 (0.0075–2150)	233	
	Freshwater	$7.00 \times 10^7$ ( $1.20 \times 10^4$ – $2.04 \times 10^9$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	223	$1.33 \times 10^7$ ( $7.00 \times 10^3$ – $8.00 \times 10^8$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	202	17.2 (0.01–267.2)	229	
	Saline	$4.99 \times 10^8$ ( $5.26 \times 10^4$ – $7.90 \times 10^9$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	22	$6.41 \times 10^7$ ( $3.90 \times 10^4$ – $3.40 \times 10^8$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	16	28.5 (0.2–144.8)	21	
	Hot spring	$5.62 \times 10^6$ ( $1.00 \times 10^4$ – $6.19 \times 10^7$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	46	$7.42 \times 10^5$ ( $1.00 \times 10^4$ – $4.30 \times 10^6$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	46	9.1 (0.12–82.9)	46	
	Ice	$2.39 \times 10^7$ ( $1.00 \times 10^4$ – $1.50 \times 10^8$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	6	$2.85 \times 10^6$ ( $4.60 \times 10^4$ – $1.00 \times 10^7$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	3	27.5 (0.7–119)	6	
	Groundwater	$9.67 \times 10^5$ ( $2.85 \times 10^4$ – $1.00 \times 10^7$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	11	$2.29 \times 10^5$ ( $6.35 \times 10^3$ – $1.92 \times 10^6$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	11	5.9 (0.08–43)	11	
	Aquatic snow	$1.95 \times 10^{10}$ ( $1.00 \times 10^5$ – $3.00 \times 10^{11}$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	19	$2.27 \times 10^8$ ( $8.00 \times 10^4$ – $9.60 \times 10^9$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	15	5.6 (0.01–26.9)	24	
	Macrofaunal nests	$1.39 \times 10^9$ ( $5.80 \times 10^7$ – $4.50 \times 10^9$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	3	$6.93 \times 10^3$ ( $7.40 \times 10^8$ – $1.70 \times 10^{10}$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	2	14.3 (0.06–36.5)	5	
			$8.70 \times 10^9$ ( $7.20 \times 10^7$ – $1.31 \times 10^{10}$ )	g <sup>-1</sup>	3	$3.16 \times 10^8$ ( $2.10 \times 10^8$ – $3.79 \times 10^8$ )	g <sup>-1</sup>	3		
			$8.77 \times 10^9$ ( $1.60 \times 10^4$ – $3.80 \times 10^{11}$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	38	$5.75 \times 10^8$ ( $1.80 \times 10^5$ – $3.95 \times 10^9$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	32	12.1 (0.001–225)	58
Benthic (sedimentary)	Marine	$1.28 \times 10^9$ ( $7.00 \times 10^3$ – $1.62 \times 10^{10}$ )	g <sup>-1</sup>	23	$2.39 \times 10^8$ ( $3.00 \times 10^5$ – $1.13 \times 10^9$ )	g <sup>-1</sup>	20			
		$6.87 \times 10^9$ ( $8.79 \times 10^6$ – $2.20 \times 10^{11}$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	33	$9.33 \times 10^8$ ( $1.00 \times 10^7$ – $7.10 \times 10^9$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	31	9.2 (0.03–67)	38	
	Freshwater	$1.06 \times 10^{10}$ ( $4.71 \times 10^6$ – $4.01 \times 10^{10}$ )	g <sup>-1</sup>	2	$2.54 \times 10^9$ ( $1.85 \times 10^7$ – $1.28 \times 10^{10}$ )	g <sup>-1</sup>	2			
		$1.07 \times 10^8$ ( $6.00 \times 10^4$ – $5.62 \times 10^8$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	6	$1.10 \times 10^7$ ( $8.90 \times 10^3$ – $6.17 \times 10^7$ )	ml <sup>-1</sup>	6	7.6 (0.002–17.5)	13	
	Saline/hot spring	$1.46 \times 10^9$ ( $1.80 \times 10^4$ – $6.86 \times 10^9$ )	g <sup>-1</sup>	7	$4.45 \times 10^8$ ( $3.20 \times 10^5$ – $2.67 \times 10^9$ )	g <sup>-1</sup>	7			
		$1.13 \times 10^9$ ( $8.53 \times 10^6$ – $4.17 \times 10^9$ )	g <sup>-1</sup>	17	$1.60 \times 10^9$ ( $3.50 \times 10^4$ – $4.50 \times 10^9$ )	g <sup>-1</sup>	15	704.4 (0.002–8200)	15	