

Microinvertebrates are a group of very small animals that can be found in many different environments, for example between the leaves of mosses. They include small arthropods, tardigrades or “water bears”, different kinds of worms, and other tiny animals.

In this project, we want to research if the distribution of these animals changes along a small area, depending on the environmental conditions. We will take samples around a zone (a town, a forest, etc) and see which little animals we can find in different parts of that location. We will check if we find the same animals in parts that have not the same temperature, humidity or in different kinds of moss.

One of the conditions that we will check is how the alterations of the environment made by humans change the communities of microscopic animals. This is very important, because these creatures are considered by a lot of scientist to be good indicators of the wellness of a natural environment.

We will also zoom out and check the distribution of this small animals in the lands around the strait of Gibraltar. This area is surrounded by mountain chains that are like islands for some of these animals. We will see how can they “jump” from one “island” to another, and when these “jumps” happened. We will see how the past variations in the climate and the changes in the shape of the land and sea affected where these animals could live. This will be important to know how all these tiny creatures will be able to stand future changes in the Earth.