Fish beyond depth – the distinct ecology of the abyssal and hadal zones

When we consider life at extreme depths, in the lower abyssal zone and the hadal trenches, it is easy to fixate on depth/pressure. Overcoming such a physiological challenge requires extensive reworking of life's mechanisms and feels truly alien from our terrestrial-centric standpoint.

Yet the world’s deepest habitats pose many other challenges, and we must remember that these novel genes and compounds exist in an animal, a fish that must feed, avoid being eaten, and successfully reproduce.

This talk outlines some of the ‘animal-level’ ecological differences between the deep abyssal and hadal trench habitats to help us tease apart and contextualise adaptations to extreme pressure against the ecological backdrop.