

Table S2. Determinations of *Alexandrium* spp. abundance by microscopy and total *sxtA1* gene content in seawater samples by qPCR assay collected at several stations in Syracuse Bay during spring 2014.

Sampling Stations and date	<i>A. minutum</i> abundance by microscopy (cells/L) ^a	<i>A. pacificum</i> abundance by microscopy (cells/L) ^a	Total <i>sxtA1</i> gene content (copies/L) ^b
St. 1 - Porto Grande Cantiere Di Benedetto 5 May	$7.68 \times 10^4 \pm 2.22 \times 10^4$	$3.47 \times 10^4 \pm 1.0 \times 10^4$	$4.44 \times 10^5 \pm 2.87 \times 10^5$
St. 2 - Porto Grande Sanità Marittima 5 May	$2.16 \times 10^4 \pm 7.03 \times 10^2$	$2.05 \times 10^4 \pm 6.68 \times 10^2$	$1.38 \times 10^5 \pm 1.80 \times 10^3$
St. 1 - Porto Grande Cantiere Di Benedetto 6 May	$6.67 \times 10^6 \pm 4.39 \times 10^5$	$5.0 \times 10^6 \pm 3.29 \times 10^5$	$7.97 \times 10^7 \pm 1.32 \times 10^7$
St. 2 - Porto Grande Sanità Marittima 6 May	$7.22 \times 10^6 \pm 1.31 \times 10^6$	$7.15 \times 10^6 \pm 1.29 \times 10^6$	$1.30 \times 10^8 \pm 4.42 \times 10^6$
St. 3 - Porto Grande Fonte Aretusa 6 th May	$1.18 \times 10^5 \pm 4.27 \times 10^4$	$7.34 \times 10^4 \pm 2.65 \times 10^4$	$1.22 \times 10^6 \pm 2.97 \times 10^5$
St. 4 - Porto Grande Capitaneria di Porto 6 May	$1.25 \times 10^6 \pm 6.99 \times 10^4$	$2.34 \times 10^6 \pm 1.31 \times 10^5$	$4.61 \times 10^7 \pm 2.73 \times 10^7$
St. 5 - Porto Grande Canale Grimaldi 6 May	$7.10 \times 10^6 \pm 2.92 \times 10^5$	$6.48 \times 10^6 \pm 2.67 \times 10^5$	$1.14 \times 10^8 \pm 2.39 \times 10^7$
St. 1 - Porto Grande Cantiere Di Benedetto 8 May	$9.14 \times 10^6 \pm 9.56 \times 10^5$	$1.76 \times 10^7 \pm 1.84 \times 10^6$	$2.55 \times 10^8 \pm 3.08 \times 10^7$
St. 2 - Porto Grande Sanità Marittima 8 May	$1.04 \times 10^6 \pm 7.12 \times 10^4$	$9.15 \times 10^5 \pm 6.27 \times 10^4$	$1.98 \times 10^7 \pm 8.43 \times 10^6$
St. 6 - Porto Piccolo Circolo Ribellino 8 May	$1.01 \times 10^6 \pm 3.82 \times 10^4$	$9.80 \times 10^5 \pm 3.70 \times 10^4$	$1.41 \times 10^7 \pm 3.25 \times 10^6$

^aMean values measured in eight replicates with standard deviation \pm SD.

^bMean values measured in three replicates with standard deviation \pm SD.