



## Otto-Jaag-Gewässerschutzpreis 2023 und ETH-Medaille für Charlotte Bopp

21. November 2023 | Claudia Carle  
Themen: Institutionelles

**Für ihre Dissertation wird die Umweltwissenschaftlerin Charlotte Bopp gleich doppelt ausgezeichnet: Am ETH-Tag vom 18. November erhielt sie den Otto-Jaag-Gewässerschutzpreis. Im Januar wird sie auch noch die ETH-Medaille entgegennehmen. Ihre Arbeit leistet einen wichtigen Beitrag zum Verständnis des biologischen Abbaus von organischen Schadstoffen in der Umwelt.**

Mit dem Otto-Jaag-Gewässerschutzpreis zeichnet die ETH Zürich hervorragende Master- und Doktorarbeiten auf dem Gebiet des Gewässerschutzes und der Gewässerkunde aus. Charlotte Bopp durfte diese Auszeichnung am ETH-Tag vom 18. November für ihre Dissertation zum Thema «The role of oxygen uncoupling by Rieske non-heme iron dioxygenases in the biodegradation of aromatic contaminants» entgegennehmen. Im Januar wird ihr auch noch die ETH-Medaille verliehen, welche die ETH Zürich für herausragende Master- und Doktorarbeiten vergibt.

### Ineffiziente Oxidation der Schadstoffe

Als Doktorandin in der Abteilung Umweltchemie des Wasserforschungsinstitutes Eawag nahm Charlotte Bopp den biologischen Abbau schwer abbaubarer, organischer Schadstoffe unter die Lupe. Gelangen solche aromatischen Verbindungen, die zum Beispiel in Pestiziden, Medikamenten oder Sprengstoffen vorkommen, in Böden und Gewässer, können Mikroorganismen diese dank einer Gruppe von Enzymen mit dem Namen «Rieske Oxygenasen» oxidieren und so abbauen. Bopp konzentrierte sich in ihrer Arbeit auf die Untergruppe der Sprengstoff-abbauenden Enzyme und wollte wissen, wie effizient diese arbeiten. Ihre Ergebnisse stellen den Enzymen kein gutes Zeugnis aus. Statt den Sauerstoff direkt auf die Schadstoffe zu übertragen, bilden die Enzyme zuerst eine besonders





protected'Oxygenations of aromatic soil and water contaminants with molecular O<sub>2</sub> catalyzed by Rieske dioxygenases are frequent initial steps of biodegradation in natural and engineered environments. Many of these non-heme ferrous iron enzymes are known to be involved in contaminant metabolism, but the understanding of enzyme-substrate interactions that lead to successful biodegradation is still elusive. Here, we studied the mechanisms of O<sub>2</sub> activation and substrate hydroxylation of two nitroarene dioxygenases to evaluate enzyme- and substrate-specific factors that determine the efficiency of oxygenated product formation. Experiments in enzyme assays of 2-nitrotoluene dioxygenase (2NTDO) and nitrobenzene dioxygenase (NBDO) with methyl-, fluoro-, chloro-, and hydroxy-substituted nitroaromatic substrates reveal that typically 20-100% of the enzyme's activity involves unproductive paths of O<sub>2</sub> activation with generation of reactive oxygen species through so-called O<sub>2</sub> uncoupling. The <sup>18</sup>O and <sup>13</sup>C kinetic isotope effects of O<sub>2</sub> activation and nitroaromatic substrate hydroxylation, respectively, suggest that O<sub>2</sub> uncoupling occurs after generation of Fe<sup>III</sup>-(hydro)peroxo species in the catalytic cycle. While 2NTDO hydroxylates *ortho*-substituted nitroaromatic substrates more efficiently, NBDO favors *meta*-substituted, presumably due to distinct active site residues of the two enzymes. Our data implies, however, that the O<sub>2</sub> uncoupling and hydroxylation activity cannot be assessed from simple structure-reactivity relationships. By quantifying O<sub>2</sub> uncoupling by Rieske dioxygenases, our work provides a mechanistic link between contaminant biodegradation, the generation of reactive oxygen species, and possible adaptation strategies of microorganisms to the exposure of new contaminants.'

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(101 chars) title => protected'Substrate-specific coupling of O<sub>2</sub> activation to hydroxylations of aromatic compounds by rieske non-heme iron dioxygenases' (132 chars) journal => protected'ACS Catalysis' (13 chars) year => protected2022 (integer) volume => protected12 (integer) issue => protected'11' (2 chars) startpage => protected'6444' (4 chars) otherpage => protected'6456' (4 chars) categories => protected'non-heme ferrous iron oxygenases; nitrobenzene dioxygenase; biocatalysis; O<sub>2</sub> uncoupling; isotope effects; xenobiotics' (117 chars) description => protected'Rieske dioxygenases catalyze the initial steps in the hydroxylation of aromatic compounds and are critical for the metabolism of xenobiotic substances. Because substrates do not bind to the mononuclear non-heme Fe<sup>II</sup> center, elementary steps leading to O<sub>2</sub> activation and substrate hydroxylation are difficult to delineate, thus making it challenging to rationalize divergent observations on enzyme mechanisms, reactivity, and substrate specificity. Here, we show for nitrobenzene dioxygenase, a Rieske dioxygenase capable of transforming nitroarenes to nitrite and substituted catechols,

that unproductive O<sub>2</sub> activation with the release of the unreacted substrate and reactive oxygen species represents an important path in the catalytic cycle. Through correlation of O<sub>2</sub> uncoupling for a series of substituted nitroaromatic compounds with <sup>18</sup>O and <sup>13</sup>C kinetic isotope effects of dissolved O<sub>2</sub> and aromatic substrates, respectively, we show that O<sub>2</sub> uncoupling occurs after the rate-limiting formation of Fe<sup>III</sup>-(hydro)peroxy species from which substrates are hydroxylated. Substituent effects on the extent of O<sub>2</sub> uncoupling suggest that the positioning of the substrate in the active site rather than the susceptibility of the substrate for attack by electrophilic oxygen species is responsible for unproductive O<sub>2</sub> uncoupling. The proposed catalytic cycle provides a mechanistic basis for assessing the very different efficiencies of substrate hydroxylation vs unproductive O<sub>2</sub> activation and generation of reactive oxygen species in reactions catalyzed by Rieske dioxygenases.' (1703 chars) serialnumber => protected'2155-5435' (9 chars) doi => protected'10.1021/acscatal.2c00383' (24 chars) uid => protected24911 (integer) \_localizedUid => protected24911 (integer)modified \_languageUid => protectedNULL \_versionedUid => protected24911 (integer)modified pid => protected124 (integer) Bopp, C. E.; Bernet, N. M.; Kohler, H.-P. E.; Hofstetter, T. B. (2022) Elucidating the role of O<sub>2</sub> uncoupling in the oxidative biodegradation of organic contaminants by Rieske non-heme iron dioxygenases, *ACS Environmental Au*, 2(5), 428-440, [doi:10.1021/acsenvironau.2c00023](https://doi.org/10.1021/acsenvironau.2c00023), [Institutional Repository](#)

Pati, S. G.; Bopp, C. E.; Kohler, H.-P. E.; Hofstetter, T. B. (2022) Substrate-specific coupling of O<sub>2</sub> activation to hydroxylations of aromatic compounds by rieske non-heme iron dioxygenases, *ACS Catalysis*, 12(11), 6444-6456, [doi:10.1021/acscatal.2c00383](https://doi.org/10.1021/acscatal.2c00383), [Institutional Repository](#)

## Links

Otto-Jaag-Gewässerschutzpreis

Projektseite "Enzyme Mechanisms and Kinetics of Organic Contaminant Oxygenation"

## Kontakt



**Thomas Hofstetter**

Abteilungsleiter

Tel. +41 58 765 5076

[thomas.hofstetter@eawag.ch](mailto:thomas.hofstetter@eawag.ch)



**Claudia Carle**

Wissenschaftsredaktorin

Tel. +41 58 765 5946

[claudia.carle@eawag.ch](mailto:claudia.carle@eawag.ch)

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