

HABITAT AND ENVIRONMENTS OF AL HISHAH DIATOMITE DEPOSITION CENTRAL LIBYA

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ABSTRACT

Diatoms are microscopic algae that occur in both freshwater and marine environments. They have a siliceous shell, or frustule, consisting of two valves, that are generally preserved in sediments. They occur in a variety of habitats; for instance, there are planktonic diatoms, and benthic diatoms that grow on sediments.

Diatoms are particularly useful as environmental indicators because many species have a narrow range of environmental conditions that are optimal for growth and survival, and diatom populations respond rapidly to environmental change.

Diatoms were analyzed from 45 samples collected from the outcrops of Al-Hishah Formation. Estimates of absolute abundance, species types, and centric or pennate shapes were recognized for each sample. Information on the ecology of the diatom species is presented, and changes in diatom modes of life are evaluated.

KEYWORDS: Habitat, Al Hishah Formation, Paleo-Environment