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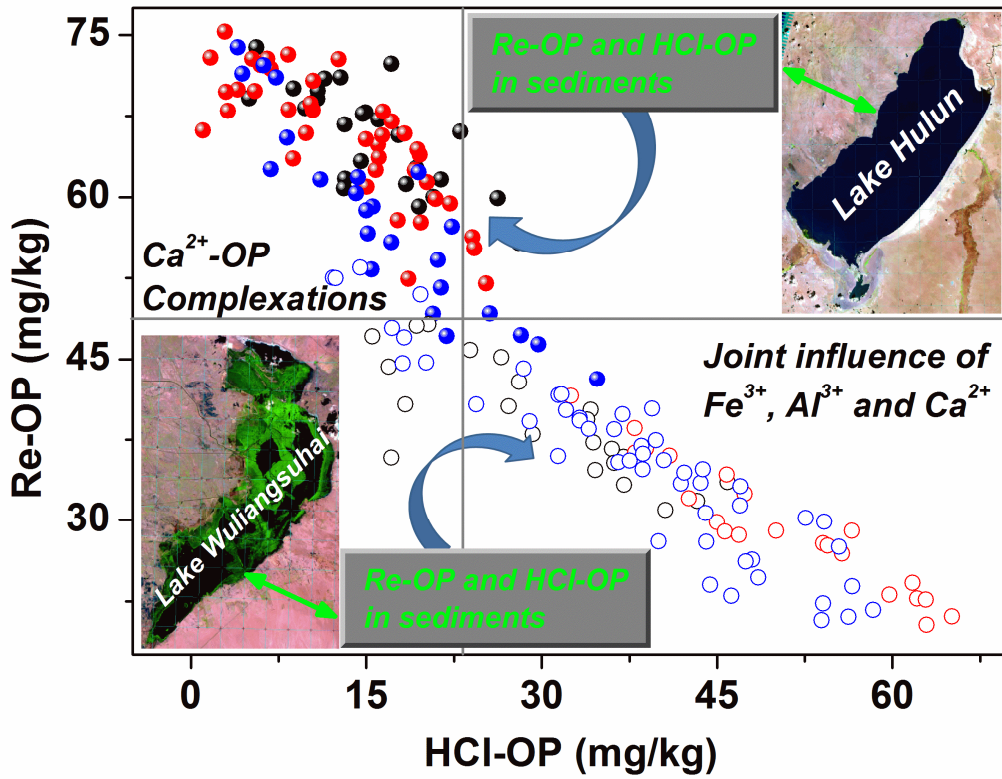
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Graphic Abstract



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## Environmental impact statement

The pattern of total OP (TOP) spatial distribution showed obvious decreasing trend from the west to the east lake districts in surface sediments from Lake Hulun (HLH). Whereas the spatial distribution pattern of dissolved OP (DOP) in overlying water, which presented different trend with TOP and total organic carbon (TOC) in surface sediments, indicated that the biological factors and terrestrial inputs showed joint influence on DOP distribution in HLH. The higher levels of Re-OP and lower levels of HCl-OP observed in HLH may reveal that calcium ions and their minerals were the key governing factors on OP fractionation in sediments from HLH. This work is helpful to understand the geochemical information archived in OP pools in lake sediments.

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4 1 **Distribution characteristics of organic phosphorous in sediments**  
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6 2 **from Lake Hulun, China**  
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11 4 **Changwei Lü<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Jiang He<sup>1,2</sup>, Bin Zhou<sup>3,4</sup>, Rolf D. Vogt<sup>3</sup>, Rui Guan<sup>1</sup>, Weiyang Wang<sup>1</sup>,**  
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14 5 **Le Zuo<sup>1</sup>, Daohao Yan<sup>1</sup>**  
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30  
31 12 **Abstract**  
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33 13 The amount of organic phosphorus (OP) and its distribution among different pools in lake  
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35 14 sediments depend on biotic and abiotic processes driving the OP fractionation. Key abiotic  
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37 15 factors governing these transformations processes between different OP fractions in  
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39 16 sediments were studied on the basis of distribution characteristics of OP pools in sediments  
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41 17 from Lake Hulun (HLH). The results showed that the order of size of OP pools was found in  
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43 18 the surface sediments from Lake Hulun: Re-OP (residual OP) >> FAOP (fulvic acid fraction)  
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45 19  $\geq$  HCl-OP (OP extracted by HCl) > HAOP (humic acid fraction) >> LOP (labile OP); lower  
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47 20 concentrations of LOP were found in lakes surface sediments with high pH (pH>9) of lakes  
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49 21 overlying water indicating a governing role of pH in LOP degradation in aquatic environment.  
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4 22 The pattern of total OP (TOP) spatial distribution showed obvious decreasing trend from the  
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6 23 west to the east lake districts in surface sediments from HLH, which was attributed to the  
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9 24 inputs of dust and dry grass driven by the prevailing wind and the finer grain size in the west  
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11 25 lake districts. Whereas the spatial distribution pattern of dissolved OP (DOP) in overlying  
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13 26 water, which presented different trend with TOP and total organic carbon (TOC) in surface  
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15 27 sediments, indicated that the biological factors and terrestrial inputs showed joint influence  
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17 28 on DOP distribution in HLH. The higher levels of Re-OP and lower levels of HCl-OP  
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19 29 observed in HLH may reveal that calcium ions and their minerals were the key governing  
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21 30 factors on OP fractionation in sediments from HLH. This work revealed the main abiotic  
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23 31 process or mechanism driving the OP fractionations in aquatic environment helping to  
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25 32 understand the geochemical information archived in OP pools in lake sediments.  
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34 **Key words:** organic phosphorus, fraction distribution, abiotic processes and factors,  
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36 sediments, lakes  
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## 39 **1 Introduction**

40 As a major growth limiting nutrient in the global biosphere, phosphorus (P) always plays a  
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42 key role in the biological productivity of aquatic ecosystems;<sup>1</sup> therefore elevated P inputs to  
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44 the aquatic environment increase the risk of eutrophication and impacts on water quality. The  
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46 predominant inorganic species is the most bioavailable P form and the emphasis for many  
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48 decades has been on the study of its determination,<sup>2, 3</sup> abundance, bioavailability and  
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50 transformation,<sup>4-6</sup> impacting mechanism on eutrophication.<sup>7, 8</sup> However in many waters and  
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4 46 sediments, the organic phosphorus (OP) fraction, which are intrinsically linked within the  
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6 47 aquatic environment, is at least as abundant as inorganic P.<sup>9</sup> In the last decade, the importance  
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8 48 of OP is recognized gradually as a potentially large pool of bioavailable P. Therefore, there  
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11 49 are many publications concerning on OP decomposition,<sup>10, 11</sup> fractionations<sup>9, 12, 13</sup> and OP  
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13 50 compounds determination using <sup>31</sup>P nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy,<sup>14-18</sup>  
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16 51 which has largely elevated the acknowledged abundance of the OP fraction in environment.  
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19 52 However, there still exists knowledge gaps' regarding the factors driving the underlying  
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21 53 processes governing the quantitative and qualitative distribution of OP pools in lake  
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24 54 sediments.

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26 55 The accumulation and fraction distribution of sedimentary OP are shown to be greatly  
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29 56 influenced by physical, chemical and biological factors and processes such as adsorption and  
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31 57 desorption, complexation and precipitation, oxidation-reduction status (redox potential) and  
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34 58 organic matter (OM) characteristics. In natural environment, in the presence of polyvalent  
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36 59 cations ( $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Al}^{3+}$ , and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ ), the OP accumulation and distribution can be influenced by the  
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39 60 formation of bridges between cations and adsorbents or co-precipitation with organic  
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41 61 phosphate salts on the reacting surface.<sup>19-22</sup> Therefore, sorption onto sediment minerals,  
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44 62 complexation and co-precipitation with polyvalent cations are listed as the main abiotic  
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46 63 processes governing the accumulation, distribution and fate of OP in the environment.<sup>9</sup>

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49 64 As mentioned above, previous works mainly concern on the OP abundance and its  
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51 65 compounds determination in the surface sediments/soils, so far the studies on abiotic  
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54 66 processes driving the OP fractionation are still fresh on the basis of the OP fractions  
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56 67 distribution in sediments. The objects of this study were to (1) characterize OP fractions by

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4 68 sequential extraction in sediments collected from Lake Hulun (HLH), (2) discuss the  
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6 69 distribution characteristics of OP pools and the governing factors, (3) reveal the main abiotic  
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9 70 process or mechanism driving the OP fractionations in aquatic environment. This article aims  
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11 71 to provide a better understanding of geochemical processes governing the distribution of OP  
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14 72 pools in the Hulun Lake sediments.  
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## 19 74 **2 Materials and Methods**

### 20 21 75 **2.1 Study Area**

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24 76 HLH is located in northeastern Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China. This is at the  
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27 77 northeastern corner of the monsoon margin, and thus sensitive to small variations in the East  
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29 78 Asian monsoon.<sup>23, 24</sup> The highly variable climate is generally arid with an annual mean  
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31 79 precipitation of 290 mm, of which three-fifths falls between July and August, an annual mean  
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34 80 theoretical evaporation of 1600 mm, and an annual mean air temperature of -0.2°C. It once  
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37 81 was the fifth largest lake in China with an area of 2339 km<sup>2</sup> and an average depth of 5.7m.  
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39 82 During the last 35-50 years the lake has experienced a dramatic reduction in its size and  
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42 83 water depth due to variations in climate. In 2011, its area shrank to 1770 km<sup>2</sup> with the mean  
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44 84 depth of 3.0-3.5 m. Two major permanent rivers, the Herlun (Kerulen or Kelulun) and Urshen  
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47 85 (Orxon or Orshun) River, feed the lake from the southwest and east, respectively (Figure 1).  
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49 86 The Dalanolom River, connected to the lake in the northeast, was the channel used for water  
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52 87 exchange between HLH and the Hailar River. The Hailar River are known as the upper  
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54 88 reaches of the Argun River which is a part of the China-Russia border.  
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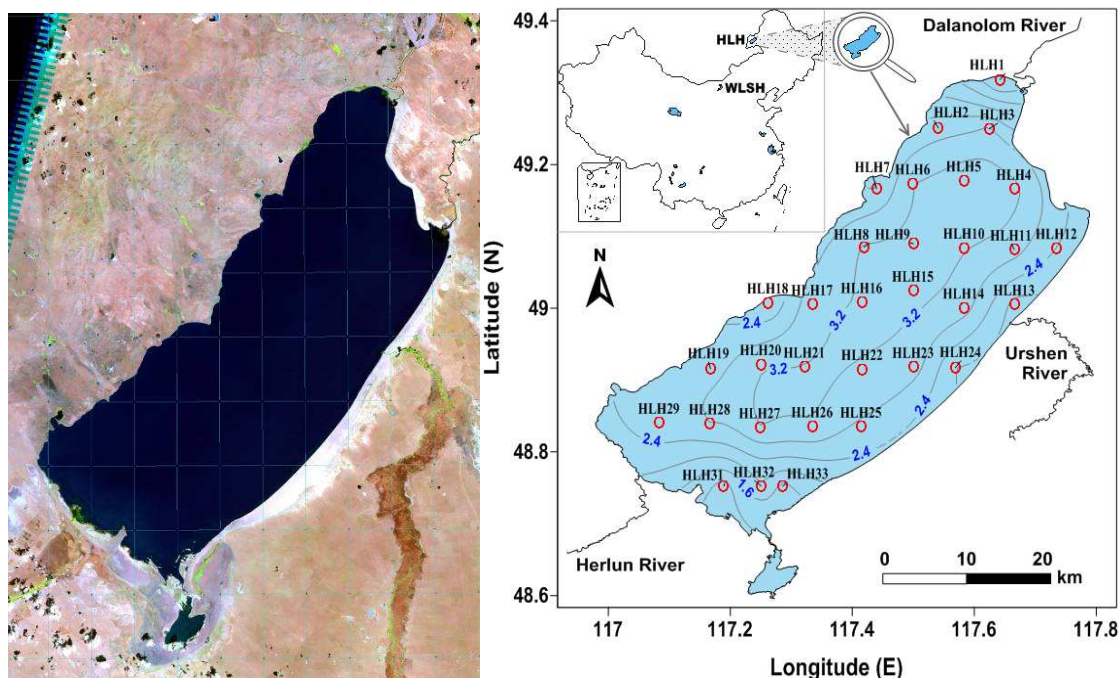


Figure 1 Remote sensing images and sampling sites in Lake Hulun

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## 90 2.2 Sediment Sampling

91 Sediments from HLH were sampled in August 2011. The surface sediments (0-10cm) were  
 92 collected using a KC collector mod B (Swedaq), while sediment cores were sampled  
 93 applying a SA Beeker collector (Eijkelkamp). The sediment cores (HLH5, HLH15, HLH22,  
 94 Figure 1) were sectioned into 2-cm slices immediately after collection and stored in sealed  
 95 polyethylene bags. Samples were transported to the laboratory in iceboxes (<4 °C). At the  
 96 laboratory the sediments were freeze-dried, ground gently in a mortar and sieved through a  
 97 standard 100-mesh sieve (150  $\mu\text{m}$ ) prior to analysis. Simultaneously, overlying water samples  
 98 were collected for all sampling sites for determination of dissolved OP (DOP). These water  
 99 samples were filtered through 0.45 mm polycarbonate filters, acidified to pH 1.0 with  
 100 hydrochloric acid, and stored refrigerated in glass bottles. In addition, Lake Wuliangshu  
 101 (WLSH), as a typical macrophyte-dominated lake, is the second largest lake in the Inner

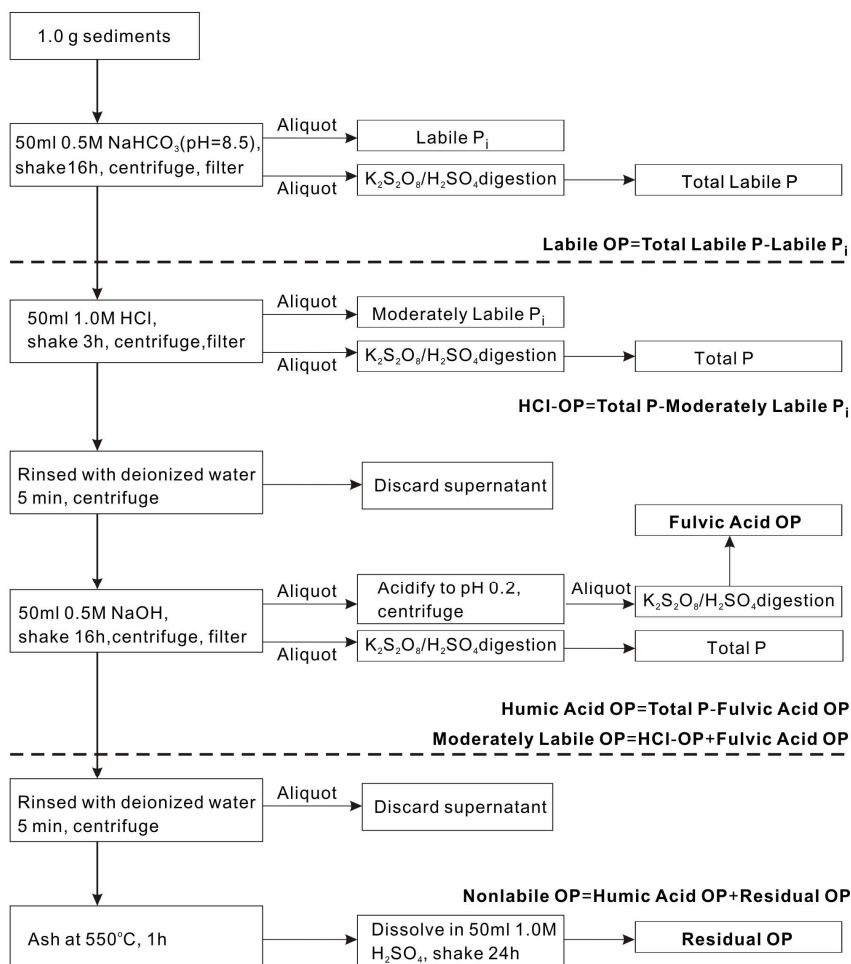


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4 102 Mongolia plateau, China.<sup>25</sup> Thus physiochemical data of sediments and overlying water that  
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6 103 were sampled in a similar manner from WLSH were included in this study.  
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### 9 104 **2.3 Experiments and methods**

10 105 A sequential extraction procedure, modified by Ivanoff et al<sup>12</sup> and Zhang et al<sup>26</sup> (Figure 2)  
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12 106 was used to fractionate the OP pools in the surface sediments and sediment cores. Following  
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14 107 the procedure, OP in sediments is fractionated into a labile pool, a moderately labile pool, and  
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16 108 a nonlabile pool. The labile pool is extracted with 0.5 M NaHCO<sub>3</sub> at pH 8.5. The extracted P  
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18 109 includes both OP (LOP) and inorganic P (IP) in pore water and sorbed on sediments. The  
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20 110 moderately labile pool is extracted with 1.0 M HCl (including HCl-OP, and IP), followed by  
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22 111 0.5 M NaOH. The NaOH extract is acidified with concentrated HCl to separate the nonlabile  
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24 112 fraction (humic acid fraction, HAOP) from the moderately labile fraction (fulvic acid fraction,  
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26 113 FAOP). Finally, the highly resistant, nonlabile fraction (Re-OP) is determined by ashing the  
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28 114 residue from the NaOH extraction at 550 °C for 1 h, followed by dissolution in 1.0 M H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>.  
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30 115 The moderately labile OP (MLOP) and nonlabile OP (NLOP) are then calculated as the sum  
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32 116 of HCl-OP and FAOP, and the sum of HAOP and Re-OP, respectively.  
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41 117 In all cases, P concentration in the extracts is determined colorimetrically by the  
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43 118 phospho-molybdate method.<sup>27</sup> Acid or alkaline extracts are neutralized prior to P  
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45 119 determinations. Total P (TP) in the extracts is measured after an aliquot is digested with 2.5  
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47 120 M H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and potassium persulfate (K<sub>2</sub>S<sub>2</sub>O<sub>8</sub>), according to the method of Bowman,<sup>28</sup> as  
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49 121 modified by Thien and Myers.<sup>29</sup> The OP in the extracts was calculated as the difference  
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51 122 between TP and IP.  
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**Figure 2** The sequential extraction procedure for OP

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124 All filters, bottles and filtration apparatus were acid cleaned prior to use. All acids used  
 125 were of guaranteed reagent grade. The water used for reagent preparation, dilution and  
 126 washing was pure water (Milli-Q water). A standard deviation below 5% was achieved in all  
 127 the analytical methods that were used.

128 Statistical analysis, such as spatial distribution and correlation analysis, was performed  
 129 using Origin 8.5, Surfer 10.0 and SPSS Statistics 21.0.

### 130 **3 Results and Discussion**

#### 131 **3.1 Fraction distributions of OP in surface sediments**

132 As can be seen from Table 1, the concentration ranges of total extracted OP (TOP) were  
133 72.2-210 mg/kg with the means of 146 mg/kg in surface sediments from HLH. The ranges of  
134 MLOP and NLOP were 14.7-92.6 and 54.1-133 mg/kg in surface sediments from HLH with  
135 the relative contribution of 19.3-56.7% and 41.6-80.2% to TOP, respectively. The average  
136 concentration of LOP found in surface sediments from HLH was 4.54 mg/kg with the  
137 average percentages of 3.04%. For WLSH, The concentration of TOP ranged from 91.2 to  
138 169 mg/kg, with a mean value of 122 mg/kg in surface sediments; Though the mean  
139 concentration of LOP was only 2.02 mg/kg, constituting a mere 1.71% of the TOP. The  
140 ranges of MLOP and NLOP were 36.8-72.5 and 36.4-108 mg/kg in surface sediments from  
141 WLSH, respectively (Table 1). Summarily, the MLOP pool was made up of a relatively  
142 similar contribution of FAOP and HCl-OP, while the NLOP consisted of mainly Re-OP, with  
143 a minor amount of HAOP. The Re-OP pool therefore alone accounted for between  
144 32.4-76.7% and 31.8-56.1% of the TOP in the surface sediments from HLH and WLSH,  
145 respectively. This means that the following order of size of OP pools was found in the surface  
146 sediments from the two lakes: Re-OP >> FAOP  $\geq$  HCl-OP > HAOP >> LOP.

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154 **Table 1 OP concentrations in surface sediments from Lake Wuliangshuai and Hulun**

OP fractions		WLSH (n=10)		HLH (n=29)		
		mg/kg	%	mg/kg	%	
Labile OP (LOP)		Min	-	-	0.55	0.52
		Max	5.17	4.75	19.0	9.38
		Mean	<b>2.02</b>	<b>1.71</b>	<b>4.54</b>	<b>3.04</b>
Moderately Labile OP (MLOP)	HCl-OP	Min	4.37	4.66	2.34	1.44
		Max	51.6	41.0	54.9	37.0
		Mean	<b>25.9</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>16.0</b>
	Fulvic Acid-P (FAOP)	Min	19.9	16.6	4.14	5.12
		Max	43.8	34.6	75.5	37.3
		Mean	<b>28.7</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>34.9</b>	<b>22.0</b>
Non-labile OP (NLOP)	Humic Acid-P (HAOP)	Min	0.26	0.21	1.33	1.72
		Max	29.9	17.6	24.6	16.3
		Mean	<b>10.4</b>	<b>7.85</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>8.14</b>
	Residual OP (Re-OP)	Min	30.2	31.8	41.9	32.4
		Max	78.4	56.1	112	76.7
		Mean	<b>55.0</b>	<b>45.0</b>	<b>72.1</b>	<b>50.8</b>
MLOP (HCl-OP + FAOP)		Min	36.8	35.1	14.7	19.3
		Max	72.5	61.8	92.6	56.7
		Mean	<b>54.6</b>	<b>45.4</b>	<b>57.4</b>	<b>38.0</b>
NLOP (HAOP + Re-OP)		Min	36.4	33.5	54.1	41.6
		Max	108	63.9	133	80.2
		Mean	<b>65.5</b>	<b>52.9</b>	<b>84.3</b>	<b>58.9</b>
Total Extracted OP (TOP)		Min	91.2		72.2	
		Max	169		210	
		Mean	<b>122</b>		<b>146</b>	

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156 Comparatively, WLSH lake is characterized as a shallow macrophyte-dominated  
 157 eutrophic lake. There were much of root exudates, such as citric and malic acid, in the  
 158 sediments due to widely distributed *Phragmites communis* Trin. and *Potamogeton pectinatus*  
 159 L.. These root exudates present the properties of organic acids which can extract Re-OP from  
 160 sediment. Our previous studies showed that MBP (microbial biomass phosphorus) varied  
 161 from 16.4 to 95.5 nmol/g·dw with the average of 58.1 nmol/g·dw in surface sediments from  
 162 WLSH.<sup>30</sup> As a result of the joint influence of microbial degradation and rhizosphere effects,

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4 163 the average concentrations and percentages of Re-OP and NLOP in surface sediments from  
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6 164 HLH were higher than those in WLSH, while the average percentage of HCl-OP and MLOP  
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9 165 in surface sediments from HLH lower than those in WLSH (Table 1). It likely indicated that  
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11 166 Re-OP may be transformed into labile P pools.<sup>31, 32</sup> This finding is helpful to find direct  
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13 167 evidence for OP degradation in sediments and recognize the knowledge of OP bioavailability  
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16 168 in aquatic environment.<sup>31, 32</sup> Furthermore, the average relative contribution of FAOP in  
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19 169 surface sediments from HLH were equal to that of WLSH, similar as HAOP (Table 1),  
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21 170 revealing the same degree of humification in both lakes.

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24 171 Compared with other lakes of China<sup>26, 33</sup> (Figure 3), lower concentrations of LOP were  
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26 172 found in Lake Hulun, Wuliangsu Hai, Qinghai and Chenghai with the pH value of aqueous  
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29 173 environments higher than 9.0, while higher LOP concentrations with lower pH in other lakes.  
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31 174 Generally, pH is a key factor for molecular characteristics of dissolved OM in aquatic  
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33 175 environment.<sup>34, 35</sup> The lower LOP found in lakes (pH > 9.0) may be attributed to the relatively  
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36 176 high solubility of LOP and its strong interaction at the water-sediment interface especially in  
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39 177 alkali aqueous environments,<sup>36</sup> which is as a result of the high solubility of OM in alkali  
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41 178 aqueous environments. Furthermore, bacterial decomposition of OM is inhibited by low pH,  
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44 179 nutrient poor conditions and low oxygen availability.<sup>37, 38</sup> Then more LOP was decomposed  
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47 180 in aquatic environment with high pH such as Lake Hulun, Qinghai, Wuliangsu Hai and  
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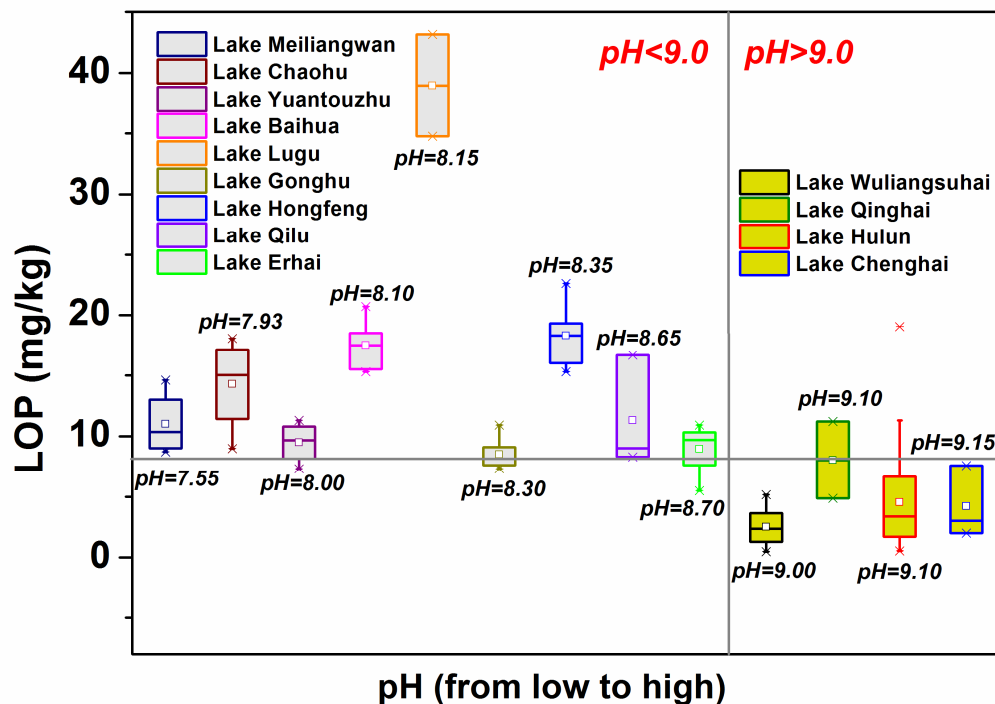


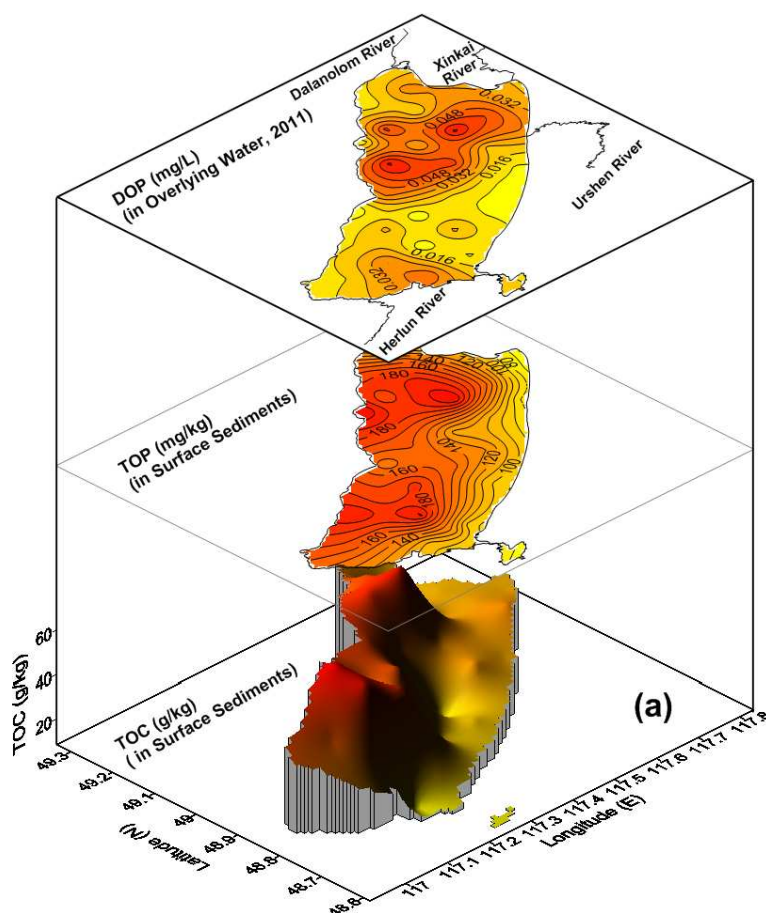
Figure 3 Relationship between LOP in surface sediments and water pH

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### 184 3.2 Spatial distribution of OP pools

185 The pattern of TOP spatial distribution showed obvious decreasing trend from the west to the  
 186 east lake districts (Figure 4), which was similar to the TOC spatial distribution in HLH  
 187 surface sediments. Geomorphological, relatively hilly terrains and semi-arid grassland as  
 188 main vegetation on the west bank of HLH lead to frequent soil erosion during rainy season. It  
 189 is rationalized due to < 40% vegetational cover and the terrain topology characterized as high  
 190 in the west and lower in the east. As a result, more import of suspended matter, associated  
 191 OM and nutrients from the HLH west bank are anticipated. This organic matter and nutrients  
 192 loads from non-point sources carried by overland runoffs are believed as one of the main  
 193 nutrient sources of HLH. Furthermore, the prevailing wind direction is from the northwest to  
 194 the southeast. The amounts of dust and dry grass deposited into HLH is estimated to be

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4 195  $6.44 \times 10^4$  t and 3350 t each year, respectively, since the northwest lake shoreline is about 150  
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6 196 km. Previous studies have shown that silty clay is the dominated in the sediments from the  
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8 197 northwest lake districts, while it is major sandy deposit on the south and east lake bottom.<sup>39</sup>  
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10 198 Therefore, on the one hand, there are more inputs of dust and dry grass driven by the  
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12 199 prevailing wind in the west lake districts; on the other hand, the inputs will be conserved  
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14 200 effectively due to the finer grain size in these lake districts. The similar decreasing trends of  
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16 201 TOC and TOP were found in the surface sediments from HLH.



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52 **Figure 4 OP spatial distributions in surface sediments from HLH**

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55 203 Actually, DOP represents as a major reservoir of dissolved P in aquatic environments,  
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57 204 comprising up to 75% of total dissolved P (TDP).<sup>40-42</sup> Over the past decades, DOP has been

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4 205 increasingly recognized as a critical driver to aquatic biological production and ecosystem  
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6 206 structure and function.<sup>43,44</sup> In overlying water from HLH, DOP concentrations accounted for  
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9 207 24-54% of TDP, suggesting its potential as major P source for the primary producers.<sup>45,46</sup> In  
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11 208 general, P levels in water column could be influenced by many factors such as elevated P  
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14 209 inputs, internal loads release, hydrobios absorption and adsorption/desorption across the  
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16 210 interface of the water-sediments. The spatial distribution pattern of DOP was different from  
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19 211 the ones of TOC and TOP. From Figure 4, high levels of DOP were found in the areas near to  
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21 212 the lake inlets, suggesting the governing role of the terrestrial inputs. Moreover, the midwest  
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24 213 lake districts were also found with high level of DOP. This observation can be explained by  
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26 214 higher level of measured biomass of phytoplankton in the midwest lake districts than in the  
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29 215 southeast.<sup>47</sup> It has been reported before that DOP in aquatic environments may conceivably  
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31 216 arise from the secretions and excretions of living bacteria, plants, and animals or from the  
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34 217 decomposition of dead organisms.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, the biological factors and terrestrial inputs  
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36 218 jointly governed the distribution pattern of DOP in overlying water from HLH.

### 39 219 **3.3 Fraction distribution of OP in sediment cores**

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41 220 Calcite precipitation is known to induce co-precipitation of inorganic phosphate and thus,  
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44 221 may potentially have important effects on the eutrophic status of aquatic environments.<sup>49-51</sup>  
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46 222 Beside IP, calcium ions and their minerals can complex with OP in soils or sediments.<sup>22,52</sup>  
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49 223 For instance, precipitation of calcium salts with calcite occurs at even very low  
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51 224 concentrations of *myo*-inositol hexakisphosphate<sup>53</sup> due to the simultaneous occurrence of  
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54 225 adsorption and precipitation of insoluble calcium-phytate.<sup>54</sup> This explains why the OP content  
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56 226 is positively correlated to the calcium content.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, OP prefer binding with Ca<sup>2+</sup> to  
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4 227 monovalent cations even at low concentrations of calcium,<sup>55</sup> since  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  cause a  
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6 228 surface-excess of positive charge in aquatic environment. As can be seen from Figure 5, the  
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9 229 concentrations of Re-OP in sediment cores from HLH were tested significantly higher than  
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11 230 those in WLSH ( $p < 0.001$ ); while HCl-OP presented significantly lower levels in HLH than  
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14 231 those in WLSH ( $p < 0.001$ ). Based on the sequential extraction procedure used in this work,  
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16 232 OP extracted by 1.0 M HCl (HCl-OP) includes OP fractions adsorbed to Fe/Al  
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18 233 oxides/hydroxides or OP salts co-precipitated with calcium ions,<sup>56, 57</sup> while Re-OP mainly  
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20 234 include the complexations of OP with calcium ions and their minerals. Accordingly, the  
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22 235 higher levels of Re-OP and lower levels of HCl-OP observed in HLH (Figure 5) may reveal  
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25 236 that calcium ions and their minerals were the key governing factors on OP fractionation in  
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28 237 sediments from HLH.

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31 238 Oxides/hydroxides of Fe and Al<sup>56, 57</sup> can strongly adsorb OP on their surfaces in soils<sup>20</sup>  
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33 239 and sediments,<sup>21</sup> even can play a governing role in most acidic soils and sediments. The  
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35 240 Fe-bound P fraction (Fe-P) and Al-bound P fraction (Al-P) were extracted by a sequential  
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37 241 extraction procedure<sup>3, 58</sup> in our previous work. Accordingly, the average concentrations of  
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39 242 Fe-P and Al-P were 11.10 and 7.15 mg/kg in sediment cores from WLSH, respectively.<sup>59</sup> The  
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41 243 pools of Al-P and Fe-P were much smaller in sediment cores from HLH, i.e. only 2.04 and  
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44 244 1.54 mg/kg, respectively. Meanwhile, significant correlations between HCl-OP and pools of  
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47 245 Al-P and Fe-P were found in the cores from WLSH. These results therefore indicated that Fe  
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49 246 and Al oxyhydroxides play a more important role in OP accumulation and fractionation in  
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51 247 WLSH than in HLH due to that the amount of iron oxide in the substrate governs the extent  
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54 248 of OP adsorption.<sup>60, 61</sup> Accordingly, HCl-OP in cores from WLSH presented higher levels and  
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249 wider variation ranges (Figure 5) revealing the joint influence of Fe, Al and Ca on OP  
 250 fractionation.

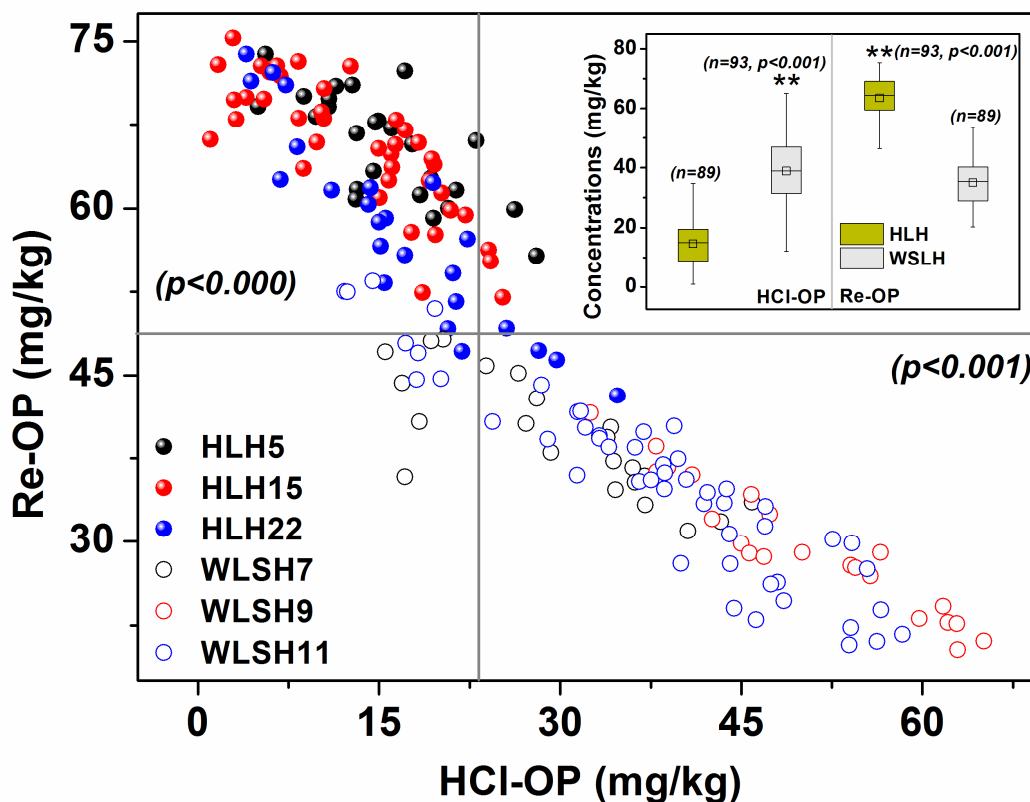


Figure 5 Distribution of HCl-OP and Re-OP in sediment cores

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 252 OP fractionations is governed by many processes and factors.<sup>9</sup> Thus abiotic process and  
 253 factors may be the main driven forces for OP re-distribution in sediments due to the lack of  
 254 obvious evidences on OP degradation in the profiles. Generally, NaOH-OP is closely related  
 255 with OM, while HCl-OP with Fe/Al oxyhydroxides. Accordingly, transformations between  
 256 NaOH-OP and HCl-OP were likely governed by the binding capacity changes of OM and  
 257 Fe/Al oxyhydroxides.<sup>31</sup> In this work, whereas no significant correlations between the Fe/Al  
 258 oxyhydroxides and HCl-OP were found in the cores from HLH; significant correlation  
 259 between the ratio of Fe-P/TOC and the ratio of HCl-OP/NaOH-OP was found in the sediment

260 cores from HLH (Figure 6). The OP transformation between NaOH-OP (including FAOP and  
261 HAOP) and HCl-OP might reflect the variation of binding capacity of OM and iron oxides  
262 for OP.<sup>62</sup> The ratio of Fe-P/TOC increased from 0.06 to 0.1 from top to bottom in sediment  
263 profiles from HLH (Figure 6) indicating the increasing binding capacity of iron oxides  
264 compared to OM.<sup>31</sup>

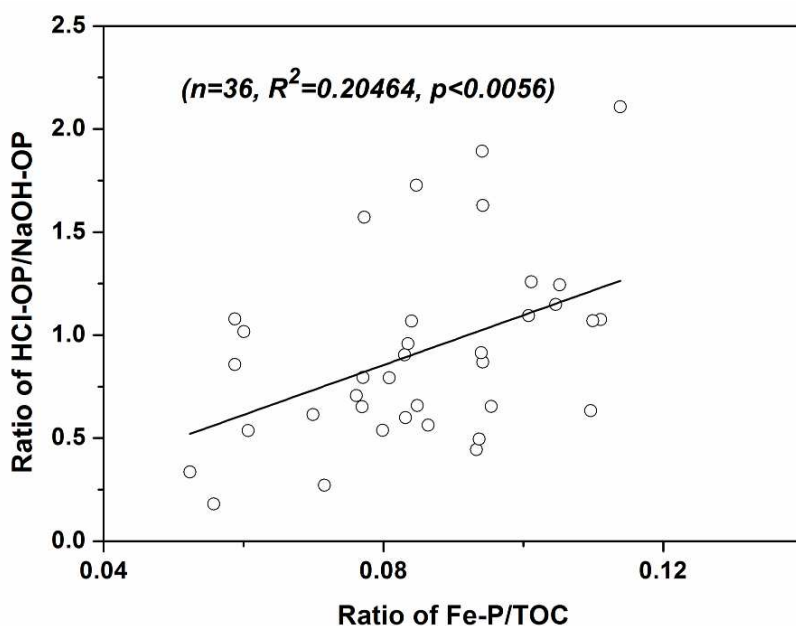


Figure 6 Correlations between the ratios of Fe-P/TOC and HCl-OP/NaOH-OP in HLH

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#### 266 4 Conclusions

267 The order of size of OP pools was found in the surface sediments from Lake Hulun:  
268 Re-OP >> FAOP ≥ HCl-OP > HAOP >> LOP. The distribution characteristics of LOP in  
269 surface sediments from 13 lakes in China indicated that high pH (pH>9) play a governing  
270 role in LOP degradation in aquatic environment.

271 Similar to TOC, the pattern of TOP spatial distribution showed obvious decreasing trend  
272 from the west to the east lake districts in surface sediments from HLH, which was attributed

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4 273 to the inputs of dust and dry grass driven by the prevailing wind and the finer grain size in the  
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6 274 west lake districts. Whereas the spatial distribution pattern of DOP in overlying water, which  
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9 275 presented different trend with TOC and TOP in surface sediments, indicated that the  
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11 276 biological factors and terrestrial inputs showed joint influence on DOP distribution in HLH.

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14 277 The higher levels of Re-OP and lower levels of HCl-OP observed in HLH may reveal  
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16 278 that calcium ions and their minerals were the key governing factors on OP fractionation in  
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19 279 sediments from HLH. The lower levels of Re-OP and the higher levels of HCl-OP indicated  
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21 280 the joint influence of multi-factors such as Fe, Al, Ca, microbial degradation and rhizosphere  
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24 281 effects on OP distribution characteristics in sediments from WLSH. This work revealed the  
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26 282 main abiotic process or mechanism driving the OP fractionations in studied aquatic and  
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29 283 surface sediment environment.

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