



The Relationship Between Winter Temperature Rise and Soil Fertility properties

Authors: Guoju, Xiao, Qiang, Zhang, Jiangtao, Bi, Fengju, Zhang, and Chengke, Luo

Source: Air, Soil and Water Research, 5(1)

Published By: SAGE Publishing

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1177/ASWR.S8599>

BioOne Complete (complete.BioOne.org) is a full-text database of 200 subscribed and open-access titles in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences published by nonprofit societies, associations, museums, institutions, and presses.

Your use of this PDF, the BioOne Complete website, and all posted and associated content indicates your acceptance of BioOne's Terms of Use, available at www.bioone.org/terms-of-use.

Usage of BioOne Complete content is strictly limited to personal, educational, and non - commercial use. Commercial inquiries or rights and permissions requests should be directed to the individual publisher as copyright holder.

BioOne sees sustainable scholarly publishing as an inherently collaborative enterprise connecting authors, nonprofit publishers, academic institutions, research libraries, and research funders in the common goal of maximizing access to critical research.

The Relationship Between Winter Temperature Rise and Soil Fertility Properties

Xiao Guoju¹, Zhang Qiang², Bi Jiangtao¹, Zhang Fengju¹ and Luo Chengke¹

¹Bioengineering Institute of Ningxia University, Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region 750021, China. ²Institute of Arid Meteorology, China Meteorological Administration, Gansu Key Laboratory of Arid Climate Changes and Disaster Reduction, Lanzhou, Gansu Province 730020, China. Corresponding author email: xiaoguoju@hotmail.com

Abstract: The effects of winter temperature rises on soil microbial activity, nutrient and salinity in Ningxia Plain were studied in a field experiment using an infrared radiator to raise temperatures. Winter temperature rises led to increases in soil organic matter, available phosphorus, soil pH and total salt content, but decreased the available nitrogen in soil and the activities of soil catalase, urease and phosphatase. With a winter temperature of 0.5 °C–2.0 °C, the activities of soil catalase, urease and phosphatase were respectively decreased by 0.08–1.20 mL g⁻¹, 0.004–0.019 mg g⁻¹, and 0.10–0.25 mg kg⁻¹; soil organic matter was increased by 0.01–0.62 g kg⁻¹, available nitrogen decreased by 2.45–4.66 g kg⁻¹, available phosphorus increased by 2.92–5.74 g kg⁻¹; soil pH increased by 0.42–0.67, and total salt increased by 0.39–0.50 g kg⁻¹. Winter temperature rises decreased soil microbial activity, accelerated the decomposition of soil nutrients, and intensified soil salinization.

Keywords: climatic warming, soil nutrients, soil salinization, microbial activity, Ningxia Plain

Air, Soil and Water Research 2012:5 15–22

doi: [10.4137/ASWR.S8599](https://doi.org/10.4137/ASWR.S8599)

This article is available from <http://www.la-press.com>.

© the author(s), publisher and licensee Libertas Academica Ltd.

This is an open access article. Unrestricted non-commercial use is permitted provided the original work is properly cited.



Introduction

The adverse effect of climatic warming on the global soil environment has emerged and aroused extensive attention in the world.¹ Climatic warming accelerates the mineralization rate of soil organic carbon, and causes a series of physical, chemical and biological soil changes², is conducive to accelerated microbial decomposition of soil organic matter, hastens the circulation of plant and soil nutrients, and leads to soil fertility decline, and quality degeneration of cultivated land.³ Climatic warming in northern China has intensified soil moisture evaporation, driven soil salts upward, and increased soil salinity and salinization.⁴ The annual average temperature in Ningxia Plain has generally risen (with some fluctuation) for 40 years, and the degree of temperature rise is higher than the average value for China, and winter temperature rise is more significant.⁵ The increase of soil salinization caused by a winter temperature rise directly affects the growth of winter crops and sprouting of spring crops⁶ Thus, studies of the effect of winter temperature rise on soil nutrients and salinity are important. In the present study, the effects of winter temperature rise on soil nutrients and salinity were studied in a field experiment using an infrared radiator to raise temperatures. This provides a reference basis for evaluating the effect of climatic warming on soil quality, and restoring and improving soil quality.

Materials and Methods

General situation of the test base

According to the survey data of soil salinization in 2009, the area of salinized soil in Ningxia Plain was 209,600 ha⁻¹, accounting for 49.7% of the total area of the cultivated land. The study was conducted at the Xidatan Experimental Station of the Ningxia Plain, which is in the arid region of the middle temperate zone, and has a continental climate. Its climate is characterized by a lack of rain, abundant sunshine, strong evaporation, and much wind and sand; annual average temperature of 9.1 °C and annual average rainfall of 185 mm. The rainfall is mainly concentrated in July–September, accounting for 70%–80% of the annual precipitation, and its annual average evaporation is 1825 mm.⁷

Experimental design

In the experiment, the mean daily temperature was increased using an infrared radiator for the designed

temperature rise of 0, 0.5, 1.0, 1.5 and 2.0 °C. The experimental field was divided into 15 individual plots, which was replicated in three complete randomized blocks. The individual plot was 2 m wide and 4 m long, and plot spacing was 3.0 m. Each plot was equipped with two tube infrared radiators, mounted 1.2 m above the ground, and their power determined according to the desired temperature rise and local climatic conditions as 250, 500, 750 and 1000 W for increases of 0.5, 1.0, 1.5 and 2.0 °C, respectively. During the period 1 December 2009 to 28 February 2010, an increase of mean daily temperature was maintained day and night, with the average daily temperature of -5.7 °C in winter. The test plot was protected against the entry of surrounding people and animals by a fence.

Temperature monitoring

During the determined period of winter temperature rise, an increase of mean daily temperature was monitored continuously through computer-Temperature Control System. An automatic temperature detector was installed in each experimental plot: the temperature at 10, 20 and 30 cm above the ground within the plot was monitored using a sensor, recorded once every 20 min, and automatically outputted and stored in the Computer. Temperature error in each experimental plot was controlled within ± 0.1 °C. Soil samples were respectively taken on 1 December 2009 and 28 February 2010 to measure the activities of soil catalase, urease and phosphatase, soil organic matter, available nitrogen (N), available phosphorus (P), available potassium (K), soil pH and total salt. In the experimental area, the soil organic matter was 7.15 g kg⁻¹, total N was 0.15 g kg⁻¹, total P was 0.15 g kg⁻¹, available N was 5.6 mg kg⁻¹, available P was 6.6 mg kg⁻¹, available K was 365.1 mg kg⁻¹, soil pH was 9.2, and total salt was 2.8 g kg⁻¹.

Determination method

The Catalase activity was determined using KMnO₄ titration method, phosphatase activity using disodium phenyl phosphate colorimetry, and urease activity using diffusion layer titration. Soil organic matter and available N, P and K were measured using a STAL-2 portable soil NPK detector, which was made in Nanjing High-speed Analytical Instrument Factory, China. Soil pH and total salt were measured as follows: collected soil samples were air-dried

indoors, and passed through a 1-mm sieve, and extracted with soil:water at 1:5 for all soil samples. CO_3^{2+} and HCO_3^- were measured using the double indicator titration method, Cl^- using AgNO_3 titration, SO_4^{2-} using EDTA back titration, Ca^{2+} and Mg^{2+} using EDTA titration, and K^+ and Na^+ using subtraction method. The soil total salt was calculated based on the above measured indexes, and soil pH was measured using a Micro Bench pH meter, which

was made in Shanghai Nano Instrument Co., Ltd., China.

Results and Analysis

Soil microbial activity

The winter temperature rise led to decreased activities of soil catalase, urease and phosphatase; the higher the temperature, the greater the downward trend (Fig. 1). The winter temperature rise of 0.5°C – 2.5°C

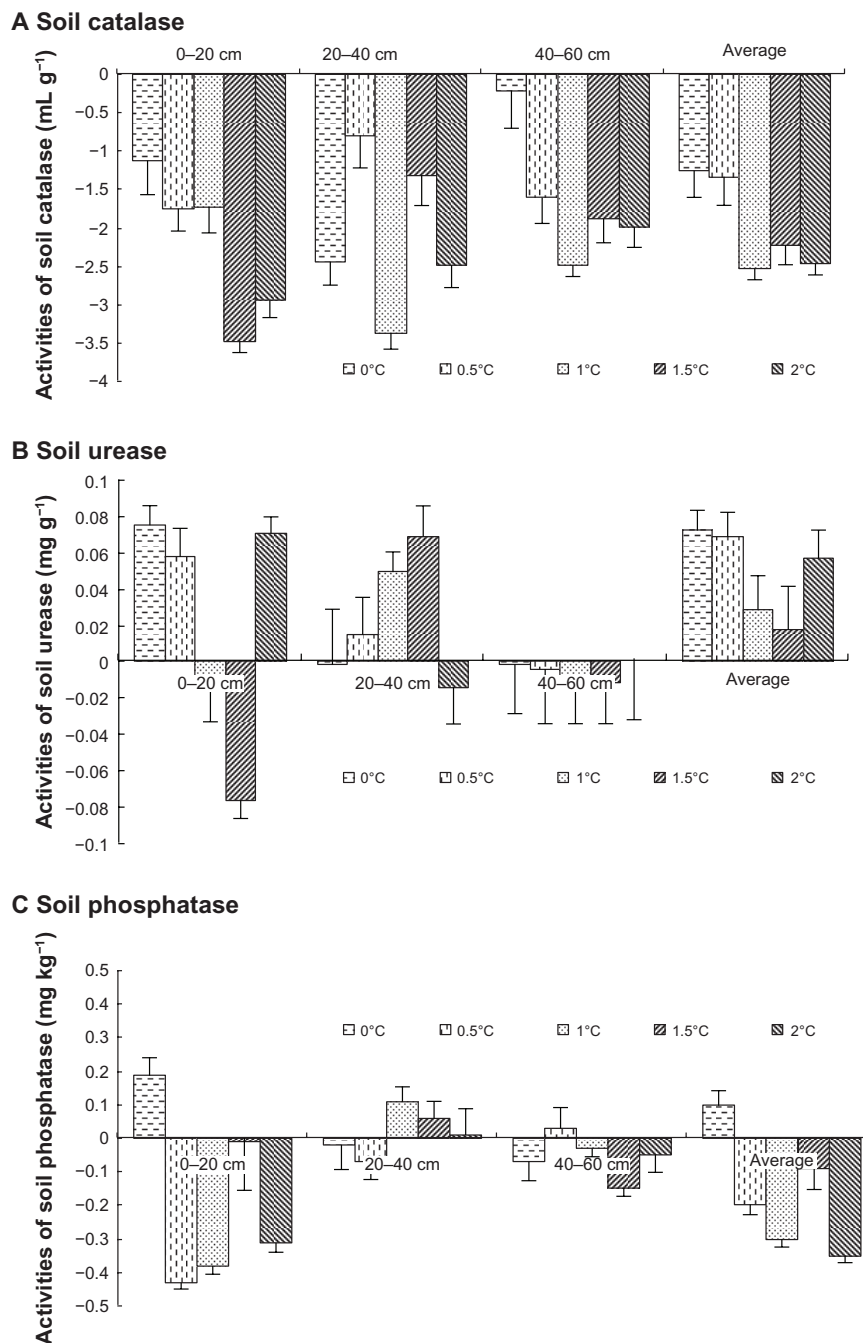


Figure 1. Relationship between winter temperature rise and the activities of soil catalase, urease and phosphatase.

decreased activities of soil catalase, urease and phosphatase by $0.08\text{--}1.20\text{ mL g}^{-1}$, $0.004\text{--}0.019\text{ mg g}^{-1}$, $0.10\text{--}0.25\text{ mg kg}^{-1}$, respectively, compared with no winter temperature rise.

Soil nutrients

The increased winter temperatures led to significantly increased soil organic matter; the higher the temperature rise, the greater the increase in organic matter. The winter temperature rise of $0.5\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}\text{--}2.5\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ led to increased organic matter by $0.01\text{--}0.62\text{ g kg}^{-1}$ compared with no winter temperature rise (Fig. 2). This may be due to the increased winter temperature was conducive to the decomposition of plant broken branches and fallen leaves in soil, and improved soil organic matter.

The increased winter temperatures led to significantly decreased available N in soil; temperature rise of $0.5\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}\text{--}2.5\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ led decreases of $2.45\text{--}4.66\text{ g kg}^{-1}$ in available N compared to no temperature rise (Fig. 3A). The increased winter temperatures led to significantly increased available P in soil; increases of $0.5\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}\text{--}2.5\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ led to increased available P by $2.92\text{--}5.74\text{ g kg}^{-1}$ compared to with no temperature rise (Fig. 3B). The increased winter temperatures had no appreciable effect on the available K in soil (Fig. 3C).

Soil pH and total salt

The increased winter temperatures led to significantly increased soil pH; with the greater the temperature increase, the greater the increase in pH. Winter temperature increases of $0.5\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}\text{--}2.0\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ increased soil pH by $0.42\text{--}0.67$ compared to no temperature

increase (Fig. 4). The increased winter temperatures significantly increased soil total salt; the greater the temperature rise, the greater the increase in soil total salt. Temperature increases of $0.5\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}\text{--}2.0\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ increased soil total salt by $0.39\text{--}0.50\text{ g kg}^{-1}$ compared to no temperature increase (Fig. 5).

Discussion

Soil enzyme activity, an important index to evaluate soil quality, can reflect soil fertility. Catalase is related to the conversion of soil organic carbon, and soil urease activity is related to the total N content in soil⁸ Catalase can promote the hydrolysis of hydrogen peroxide, and its activity is related not only to the amount and activity of microorganisms, but also the soil organic matter content, and to an extent reflects the intensity of soil microbiological processes.⁹ Hofmann suggested using soil enzyme activity as an index of soil biological activity and productivity. Soil urease and phosphatase activities can be taken as the indexes of soil fertility, and the enzyme activity is influenced by the soil chemical properties and other enzyme activities.¹⁰ Urease catalyzes urea to hydrolyze to ammonia, and promotes the hydrolysis of peptide bonds in organic matter. Its activity shows a positive correlation with soil microbial biomass, organic matter content, total N content and available N content, and can be used to characterize the conversion of organic N in soil.¹¹ Phosphatase can promote the hydrolysis of organic P compounds in soil, and its activity depends largely on the soil humus content, available P content and the microbial biomass able to decompose organic P compounds; and is an index

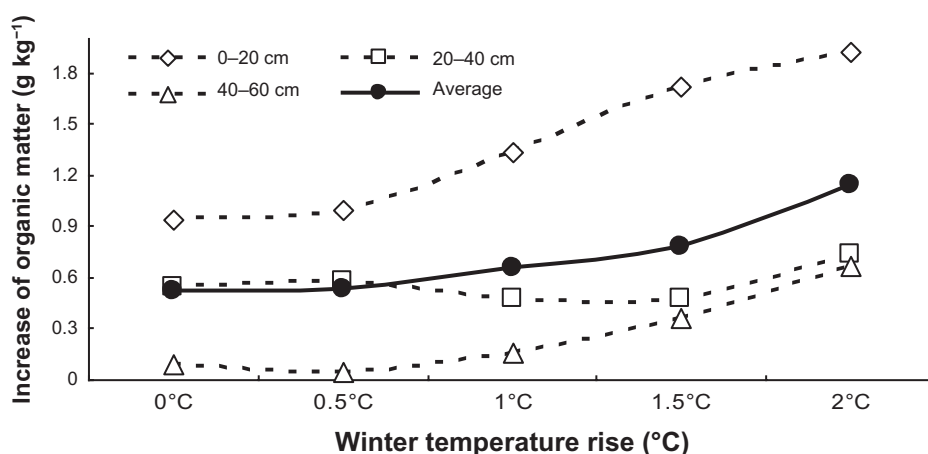


Figure 2. Relationship between winter temperature increases and soil organic matter.

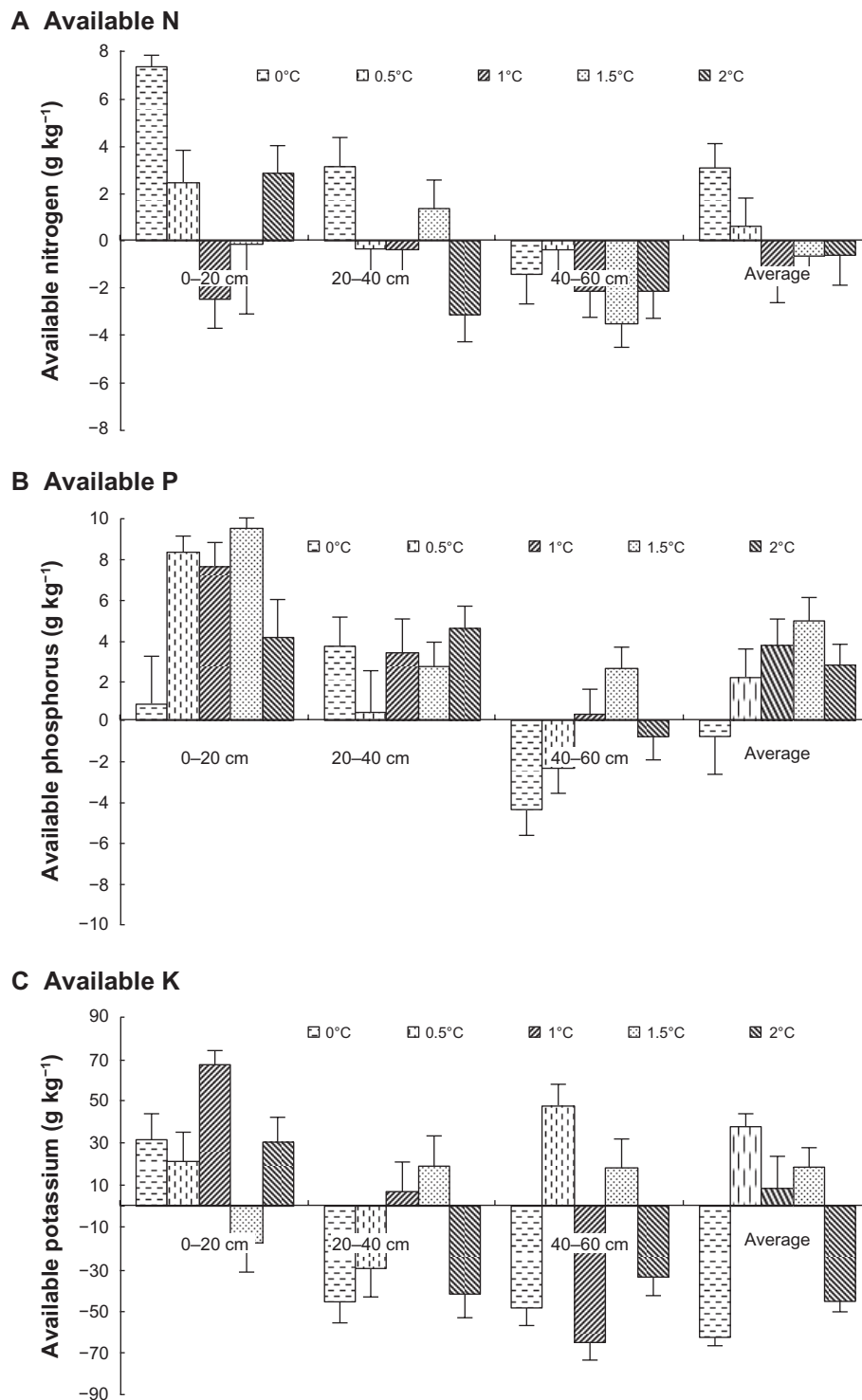


Figure 3. Relationship between winter temperature rise and changes in available N, P and K in soil.

to evaluate the biological conversion direction and intensity for soil P.

In general, temperature increases indirectly affect soil enzyme activities through affecting the soil microbial community structure, microbial diversity, microbial biomass, microbial respiration, mineralization rate

of soil organic matter, soil hydrothermal conditions, decomposition of organic matter and other factors.¹² If the temperature is excessively high, soil enzymes will denature and lose their activity; if temperature is excessively low, enzyme activities will decline. Soil temperature has a significant effect on soil enzyme activities,

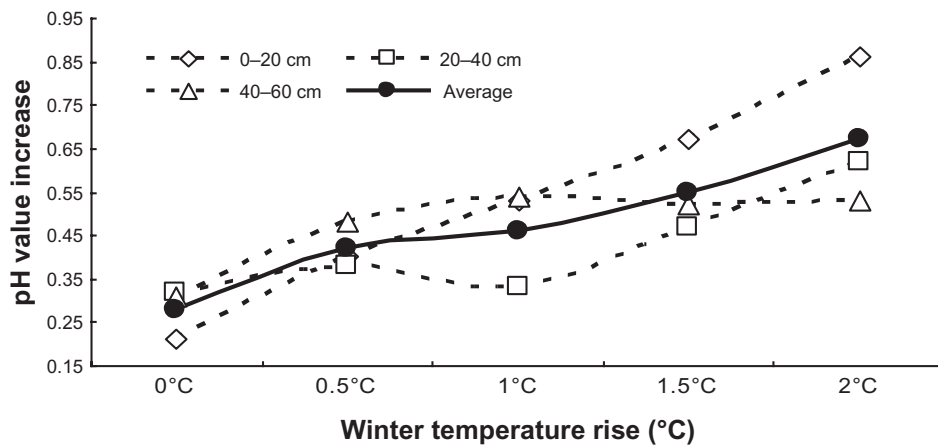


Figure 4. Relationship between winter temperature increases and soil pH.

and soil phosphatase activity can increase by 20% if the soil temperature increases by 6.2 °C.¹³ However, the exact effect of winter temperature increases on the activities of soil catalase, urease and phosphatase is unknown. The present study showed that increased winter temperatures led to decreased activities of soil catalase, urease and phosphatase; with temperature increases of 0.5 °C–2.0 °C, these activities were decreased by 0.08–1.20.20 mL g⁻¹, 0.004–0.019 mg g⁻¹ and 0.10–0.25 mg kg⁻¹, respectively.

Temperature is one of the main driving factors accelerating the mineralization of soil organic carbon. Climatic warming has accelerated the mineralization rate of soil organic carbon, resulting in accelerated microbial decomposition of soil organic matter, thereby speeding up the changes in soil nutrients. Studies have shown that temperature increases promote the decomposition of soil organic matter, resulting in decreased soil fertility.¹⁴ Studies

concerning the content, magnetic susceptibility and particle size of Pb, Cu, Zn, Cd and Mn in loess in Qishan showed that in the process of differentiating loess parent materials to soil, the differentiation degree and development degree of vegetation depended on local average rainfall and temperature.¹⁵ In the present study, the winter temperature increase led to increased soil organic matter and available P. Winter temperature rise of 0.5 °C–2.0 °C led to increased soil organic matter by 0.01–0.62 g kg⁻¹ and available P by 2.92–5.74 g kg⁻¹; and decreased available N by 2.45–4.66 g kg⁻¹.

Crops in saline soil need to consume more energy to absorb water from soil or make biochemical adjustments within plant cells compared to non-saline soils, thus in general too much salt in the root zone will reduce crop growth rate and crop yield.¹⁶ Salinity in soil reduces the soil osmotic potential, thereby reducing the difference in water potential

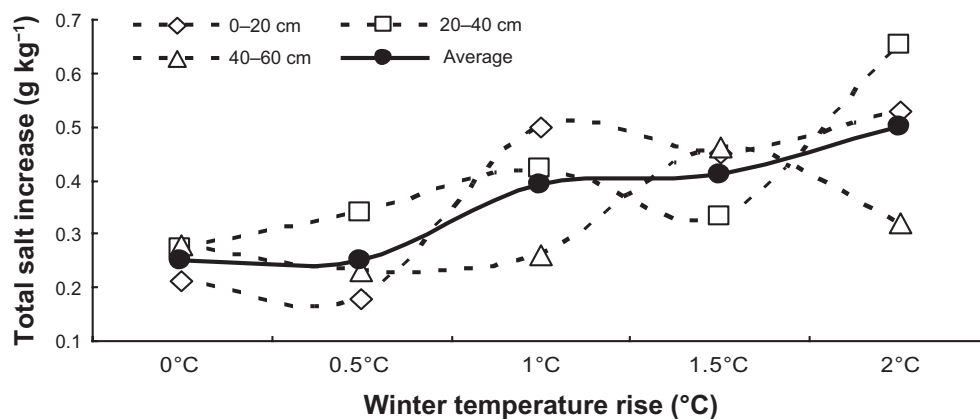


Figure 5. Relationship between winter temperature rise and soil total salt.

between internal and external to roots and so reducing soil water availability. When the concentration or activity of some ions in soil is too high, this can lead to disproportionality or deficiency of crop nutrients.¹⁷ Climatic warming has accelerated the evaporation of soil moisture, driven soil salts upward, and caused increased soil salinity and salinization. Studies of soil salinity position in a recent 35-year period showed that when the annual average temperature in Ningxia Yellow River irrigation area increased, the total salt content of the soil showed a significant increasing tendency⁴ In this 35-year period, the total salt in light, medium and heavy salinized soils had increased by 0.08, 0.13 and 0.19 g/kg, respectively. Simulated results for the Ningxia Yellow River irrigation area indicate that at temperature increases of 0.5 °C–3.0 °C, the total salt in light, medium and heavy salinized soils will increase by 0.03–0.17, 0.06–0.24 and 0.09–0.32 g/kg, respectively. After winter temperature increases, CO₃²⁻, HCO₃⁻, Na⁺ and Mg²⁺ move upward and accumulate in the surface soil, which leads to increased soil salinity, and will directly affect the sprouting and growth of spring crops.¹⁸ In the present study, the winter temperature rise led to significantly increased soil pH value and total salt content; the temperature increases of 0.5 °C–2.0 °C led to increased soil pH by 0.42–0.67, and total salt by 0.39–0.50 g kg⁻¹.

Conclusions

The effects of winter temperature rises on soil microbial activity, nutrients and salinity in the Ningxia Plain were studied in a field experiment using an infrared radiator to increase temperatures. The winter temperature increases of 0.5 °C–2.0 °C led to decreased activities of soil catalase, urease and phosphatase by 0.08–1.20 mL g⁻¹, 0.004–0.019 mg g⁻¹, and 0.10–0.25 mg kg⁻¹, respectively; increased soil organic matter by 0.01–0.62 g kg⁻¹, decreased available N by 2.45–4.66 g kg⁻¹, increased available P by 2.92–5.74 g kg⁻¹, increased soil pH by 0.42–0.67, and increased total salt by 0.39–0.50 g kg⁻¹. After winter temperature increases, the activities of soil catalase, urease and phosphatase showed a significant decreasing tendency; and soil organic matter and available N showed a significant increasing tendency. However, available N showed a significant decreasing tendency, and available K showed no significant changes;

and soil pH and total salt significantly increased. In general, increased winter temperatures led to reduced soil microbial activity, accelerated the decomposition of soil nutrients, and intensified soil salinization.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Chinese Public Welfare Meteorology Industry Research Project (GYHU201106029-03, GYHU200806021-05), the Program for New Century Excellent Talents in University (NCET-09-0859), and National Natural Science foundation of China (41165009).

Disclosures

Author(s) have provided signed confirmations to the publisher of their compliance with all applicable legal and ethical obligations in respect to declaration of conflicts of interest, funding, authorship and contributorship, and compliance with ethical requirements in respect to treatment of human and animal test subjects. If this article contains identifiable human subject(s) author(s) were required to supply signed patient consent prior to publication. Author(s) have confirmed that the published article is unique and not under consideration nor published by any other publication and that they have consent to reproduce any copyrighted material. The peer reviewers declared no conflicts of interest.

References

1. Chabrierie O, Laval K, Puget P, Desaire S, Alard D. Relationship between plant and soil microbial communities along a successional gradient in a chalk grassland in north-western France. *Applied Soil Ecology*. 2003;24(1): 43–56.
2. Xiao GJ, Zhang Q, Wang J. Impact of global climate change on agro-ecosystem: A review. *Chinese Journal of Applied Ecology*. 2007;18(8):1877–85.
3. Zhou T, Shi PJ, Wang SQ. Impacts of climate change and human activities on soil carbon storage in China. *Acta Geographica Sinica*. 2003;58(5): 727–34.
4. Xiao GJ, Zhang Q, Li Y, Zhang FJ, Lou CK. Impact of climatic warming on soil salinity and irrigation amount of Yellow River irrigation areas in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. *Transactions of the Chinese Society of Agricultural Engineering*. 2010;26(6):7–13.
5. Chen XG, Su ZS, Zheng GF. Analysis on climatic changes in Ningxia. *Journal of Arid Land Resources and Environment*. 2005;16(9):43–7.
6. Xiao GJ, Zhang Q, Li Y, Zhang FJ. The effect of winter temperature rise on soil moisture and salinization. *Transactions of the Chinese Society of Agricultural Engineering*. 2011;27(8):46–51.
7. Yang JG, Huang GH, Ye DZ, et al. Saline water irrigation management for spring wheat in the Yellow River Irrigation District of Ningxia. *Transactions of the Chinese Society of Agricultural Engineering*. 2010;26(4):49–56.
8. Kang HJ, Kim SY, Fenner N, Freeman C. Shifts of soil enzyme activities in wetlands exposed to elevated CO₂. *Science of the Total Environment*. 2005;337(1–3):207–12.



9. Dick WA, Cheng L, Wang P. Soil acid and alkaline phosphatase activity as pH adjustment indicators. *Soil Biology and Biochemistry*. 2000;32(13):1915–9.
10. Kramer S, Green DM. Acid and alkaline phosphatase dynamics and their relationship to soil microclimate in a semiarid woodland. *Soil Biology and Biochemistry*. 2000;32:179–88.
11. Aon MA, Colaneri AC. Temporal and spatial evolution of enzymatic activities and physicochemical properties in an agricultural soil. *Applied Soil Ecology*. 2001;18(3):255–70.
12. Xue L, Kuang LG, Chen HY. Soil nutrients, microorganisms and enzyme activities of different stands. *Acta Pedologica Sinica*. 2003;40(2):280–5.
13. Chen CR, Condon LM, Davis MR, Herlock RR. Seasonal changes in soil phosphorus and associated microbial properties under adjacent grassland and forest in New Zealand. *Forest Ecology and Management*. 2003;177(1–3):539–57.
14. Hinojosa MB, Carreira JA, Ruiz RG, Dick RP. Soil moisture pre-treatment effects on enzyme activities as indicators of heavy metal-contaminated and reclaimed soils. *Soil Biology and Biochemistry*. 2004;36(10):1559–68.
15. Pang JL, Huang CC, Zhang ZP. Pb, Cu, Zn, Cd, Mn elements and climatic change in the loess-paleosol profile at Qishan, Shaanxi Province. *Journal of Desert Research*. 2001;21(2):151–6.
16. Kwon S, Pignatello JJ. Effect of natural organic sub-stances on the surface and adsorptive properties of environmental black carbon (char): Pseudo pore blockage by model lipid components and its implications for N2-probed surface properties of natural sorbents. *Environmental Science and Technology*. 2005;39:7932–9.
17. West TO, Six J. Considering the influence of sequestration duration and carbon saturation on estimates of soil carbon capacity. *Climatic Change*. 2007;80:25–41.
18. Jones C, McConnell C, Coleman K, et al. Global climate change and soil carbon stocks; predictions from two contrasting models for the turnover of organic carbon in soil. *Global Change Biology*. 2005;11:154–66.
19. Zhang YP, Hu KL, Li BG. Spatial distribution pattern of soil salinity and saline soil in Yinchuan Plain of China. *Transactions of the Chinese Society of Agricultural Engineering*. 2009;25(7):19–24.

Publish with Libertas Academica and every scientist working in your field can read your article

“I would like to say that this is the most author-friendly editing process I have experienced in over 150 publications. Thank you most sincerely.”

“The communication between your staff and me has been terrific. Whenever progress is made with the manuscript, I receive notice. Quite honestly, I’ve never had such complete communication with a journal.”

“LA is different, and hopefully represents a kind of scientific publication machinery that removes the hurdles from free flow of scientific thought.”

Your paper will be:

- Available to your entire community free of charge
- Fairly and quickly peer reviewed
- Yours! You retain copyright

<http://www.la-press.com>