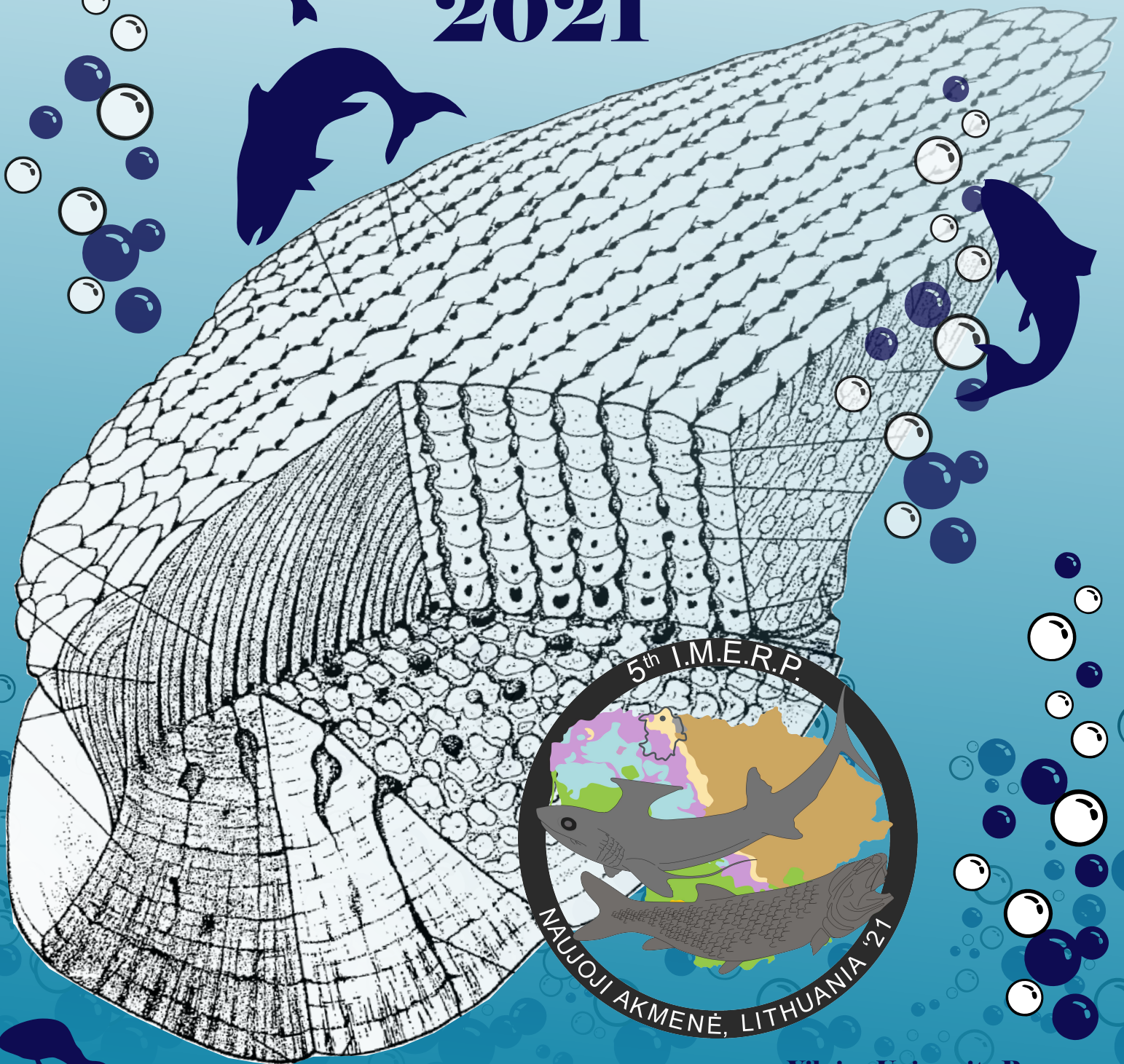
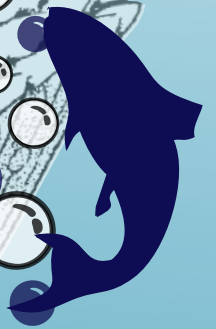
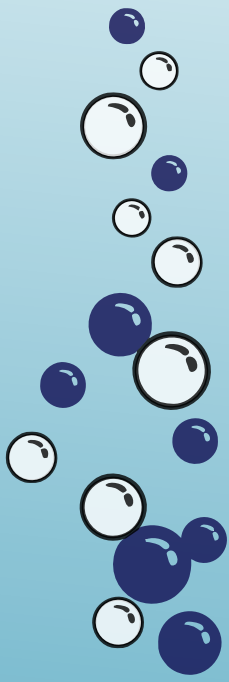
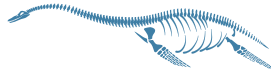


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REPORT OF ICHNOFOSSILS FOUND IN THE AEOLIAN DUNES AND SAND SHEETS OF LITHUANIA

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As far as we know, there are no documented vertebrate tracks from European Aeolian Sand-Belt (EASB), which extends from England to Russia. However, vertebrate ichnofossils were reported from other similar high-latitude aeolian environments (e. g. D. Lea, 1996; Loope, 1986) and from other environments which are geographically close to EASB (e. g. Huddart et al., 1999, Milàn et al., 2007). This lack of documented ichnofossils from EASB might be due to the lack of research interest and, especially in Lithuania's case, lack of outcrops. Open-pit sand quarries are less prevalent in Lithuania, as most of the EASB area is declared a national park, while natural outcrops are very limited. Thus, we tried pit excavation to explore several forest-covered aeolian locations in Lithuania. The preliminary excavations uncovered a range of bioturbations. The origin of these bioturbations, however, is ambiguous, because they resemble other organic/inorganic structures and were found in a quite shallow subsurface (depth 1 – 1.5 m). However, these bioturbations also resemble vertebrate tracks reported from other locations. Like in many other cases (e. g. Milàn et al., 2006) bioturbations were related to organically enriched sediments/paleosols that were later covered by aeolian sand. Thus, further exploration is needed to uncover undeniable tracks or trackways of vertebrates in Lithuania. However, the preliminary finds demonstrate the potential of pit excavation to discover ichnofossils in outcrop-free areas.

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