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Horizontal and vertical distribution of Copepoda in the southern part of the Drake Passage and in the Bransfield Strait (BIOMASS-SIBEX 1983/1984)

ABSTRACT: During the BIOMASS-SIBEX Antarctic expedition the distribution of Copepoda in three water layers (0—100, 100—300 and 300—500 m) in the Bransfield Strait and southern Drake Passage was studied. Altogether 46 taxa were recorded (Tabs. 1 and 2); the number of taxa increased with depth. Faunistic differences between the Drake Passage and the Bransfield Strait were observed. In some species the age-related splitting of the populations was registered (Figs. 2, 3 and 4). Young generations occupied usually the upper water layers.

Key words: Antarctica, BIOMASS, Copepoda.

1. Introduction

This work was done within the MR-I-29A Project of the Institute of Ecology, and is a continuation of the research (Żmijewska 1985) of the Polish BIOMASS-SIBEX expedition on board of the r/v "Profesor Siedlecki". The pelagic fauna of the investigated region was previously studied in 1981 (Jażdżewski, Kittel and Łotocki 1982) during the BIOMASS-FIBEX stage of research. At that time distinct quantitative and qualitative differences were found between the zooplankton assemblages of the Drake Passage and the Bransfield Strait (Jażdżewski, Kittel and Łotocki 1982, Rakusa-Suszczewski 1983). Of the plankton data obtained during SIBEX 1983/84, only the results pertaining to the plankton collected by the Bongo net from the 0—200 m layer have been published so far (Witek et al. 1985). These authors have given the wet formaline volume of the basic forms

of macrozooplankton and showed their distribution as well. Żmijewska (1985) analysed the quantitative composition of copepods of the group Calanoida.

The purpose of the present work was to analyse the horizontal and vertical distributions, as well as the biology of the dominant species of Copepoda.

2. Materials and methods

70 plankton samples were collected in 30 stations distributed along four transects (A-D) in the southern Drake Passage and in the central and eastern parts of the Bransfield Strait (Fig. 1). Precise position of these

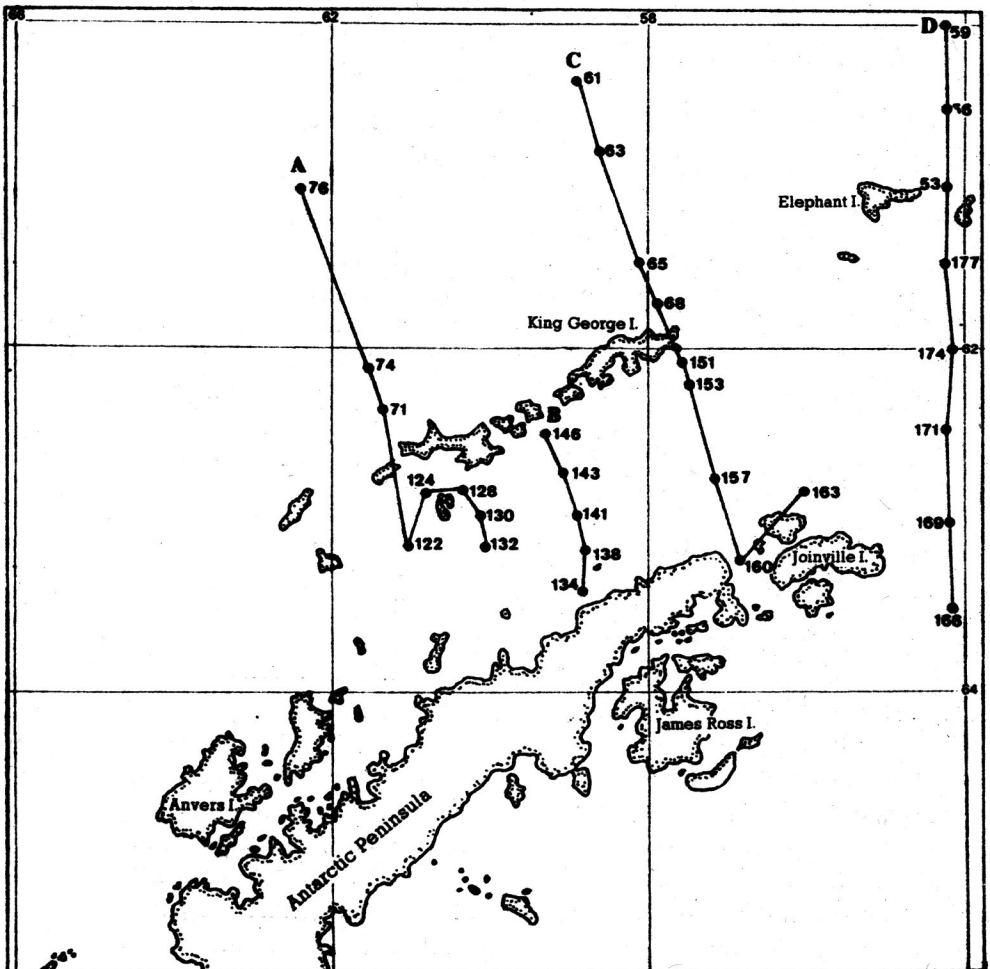


Fig. 1. Positions of sampling stations along four transects (A-D) in the SIBEX research area (1983–84)

stations is given by Rakusa-Suszczewski and Lipski (1985). The research material was obtained by the r/v "Profesor Siedlecki" during the period from 21 Dec. 1983 until 4 Jan. 1984. A self-closing Nansen type gauze plankton net with a mouth diameter of 70 cm (0.385 m²) and 260 µm mesh size, was used for the collections. Three standard water layers were sampled: 500—300 m, 300—100 m, 100—0 m. In the off shore areas they were: from bottom to 100 m; from 100 m to surface. Small Calanoida of the families Pseudocalanidae, Spinocalanidae and Scolecithricidae, and also the nauplii of Calanoida, as well as all the Cyclopoida were analysed in three subsamples of 1 ml each. The numbers of specimens were related to the quantities of Copepoda in 1000 m³ of water.

3. Results and discussion

46 taxa of Copepoda were found in the analysed samples; among them 30 species belong to 11 families and three suborders (Table 2). Most frequent and relatively most numerous in the whole research area were the following species of Calanoida: *Calanoides acutus*, *Calanus propinquus*, *Rhincalanus gigas*, *Ctenocalanus vanus*, *Scolecithricella* sp., *Metridia gerlachei*. Among the Cyclopoida dominant were: *Oithona similis*, *O. frigida*, *Oncaea conifera* and *O. curvata*. According to Vervoort (1965) there occur 126 species of Copepoda in the Antarctic; of these 28 species are characteristic for the epipelagic waters. The results of the BIOMASS-FIBEX studies showed the presence of only 19 taxa (Jazdzewski, Kittel and Łotocki 1982). This poor qualitative composition of Copepoda during FIBEX was due to the fact, that samples were not taken below the depth of 300 meters. Hardy and Gunther (1935) observed an increase of the number of species with greater depth, which is supported by the present SIBEX data. 38 species occurred in the 500—300 m layer, and 20 in 100—0 m surface layer (Table 1). Generally copepods in the research area were represented by species typical for the Antarctic waters; nevertheless on the northern edges of the transects in the Drake Passage there occurred typical Subantarctic copepods such as *Calanus simillimus*, *Clausocalanus laticeps* or *Metridia lucens* (Table 2). Their presence was also noted in the Bongo net collections (Żmijewska 1985).

Among Copepoda in the Antarctic waters, the most important role is played by the "interzonal" species, such as *Calanoides acutus*, *Calanus propinquus* and *Rhincalanus gigas* (Mackintosh 1937), which inhabit in winter deeper waters, while in summer stay close to the surface. At the beginning of the Antarctic summer the numbers of these species were not high in the whole research area (Table 2). *Calanoides acutus* occurred at all stations, in three sampling water layers. Highest aggregations of this copepod were found in the Drake Passage at the most northern stations. Maximum

Table 1

Occurrence of Copepoda in relation to depth

species	depth		
	500—300	300—100	100—0
CALANOIDA			
family Calanidae			
<i>Calanus simillimus</i> Giesbrecht, 1902	—	+	+
<i>Calanus propinquus</i> Brady, 1883	+	+	—
<i>Calanoides acutus</i> Giesbrecht, 1902	+	+	+
family Eucalanidae			
<i>Eucalanus</i> sp.	+	—	—
<i>Rhincalanus gigas</i> Brady, 1883	+	+	+
family Pseudocalanidae			
<i>Microcalanus pygmaeus</i> (Sars, 1900)	+	+	+
<i>Clausocalanus laticeps</i> Farran, 1929	+	+	+
<i>Ctenocalanus vanus</i> Giesbrecht, 1888	+	+	+
<i>Drepanopsis</i> sp.	—	+	—
<i>Stephus longipes</i> Giesbrecht, 1888	+	+	+
family Spinocalanidae			
<i>Spinocalanus</i> sp.	—	+	—
family Aetideidae			
<i>Euaetideus bradyi</i> (Scott, 1909)	+	—	—
<i>Euaetideus</i> spp.	+	—	—
<i>Gaidius tenuispinus</i> (Sars, 1900)	+	+	—
<i>Gaidius</i> sp.	+	—	—
<i>Chiridiella</i> sp.	—	+	—
<i>Chiridius polaris</i> Wolfenden, 1911	+	+	—
<i>Euchirella rostromagna</i> Wolfenden, 1911	+	—	—
<i>Euchirella</i> sp.	+	+	—
family Euchaetide			
<i>Euchaeta antarctica</i> Giesbrecht, 1902	+	—	—
<i>Euchaeta biloba</i> Farran, 1929	+	+	—
<i>Euchaeta</i> spp.	+	+	+
family Scolecithricidae			
<i>Racovitzanus antarcticus</i> (Giesbrecht, 1902)	+	+	+
<i>Scolecithricella glacialis</i> (Giesbrecht, 1902)	+	+	+
<i>Scolecithricella</i> spp.	+	+	+
<i>Scaphocalanus</i> sp.	+	+	+
family Metridiidae			
<i>Metridia gerlachei</i> Giesbrecht, 1902	+	+	+
<i>Metridia curcicauda</i> Giesbrecht, 1902	+	—	—
<i>Metridia lucens</i> Boeck, 1863		+	+
<i>Pleuromamma robusta</i> (Dahl, 1894)			
f. <i>antarctica</i> Steuer, 1931	+	+	—
family Heterorhabdidae			
<i>Heterorhabdus austrinus</i> Giesbrecht, 1902	+	+	—
<i>Heterorhabdus farrani</i> Brady, 1918	+	+	—
<i>Heterorhabdus</i> spp.	+	+	—
family Augaptidae			

Quantitative occurrence of Copepoda in the SIBEX research area (ind·1000⁻³m) — Section D

Species	Date Station Depth (m)	22.12.1983			21.12.1983			4.01.1984			3.01.1984														
		59			56			53			177			174			171			169			166		
		500-300	300-100	100-0	300-100	100-0	300-100	100-0	500-300	500-300	100-0	500-300	300-100	100-0	500-300	300-100	100-0	300-100	100-0	300-100	100-0	300-100	100-0		
1																									
2		13	65		13	26	26	78		91	422	13	26	104		117		19		34	468				
3		636	26	52	649	26	312	20078	325	221		104	78	1325	422	351	20782		5610	174	9818				
4																									
5		195	260		649				130	52	26	13	130	26			26								
6			442									247				753									
7		2260	1250	260	1920		508	1080							4245										
8		3896	8442	6494										3247	3246	1950									
9																									
10																									
11																									
12																									
13																									
14																									
15							26		322			104									174				
16																									
17																									
18																									
19																									
20																									
21										13					94										
22		260	422		234		65	26	346	39		143	182	26	1416			93							
23		39	104		78				22			13	13												
24			39												48										
25		39			649							65					78								
26																					34				
27		7571	4545		1312		584	1351	2359	104		2740	1338	26	10850	766		7369	1247	2602	2182				
28															48										
29			39		13		13						13												
30		26																							
31			26				26																		
32		208							22			39	13												
33					52																				
34		52			26																				
35			52				26									13					34				
36																									
37										26					284		2805								
38		10399	1944	1294			234		390	4740		2596	3247	5714	48	195	28571								
39							234					1299					2805								
40		5844	31169	35065	9780		503	15083	390	4740	18701	2597	7792	45714		844	1299	2226	2591	1384	2597				
41		6494	1299		1299		1299		909			1948	325		7075	1299		1670		2076					
42		3899					545		390			3247			4425	649									
43		649			1299		234	6494	5195			1390	7468	2078	26887	5195		6679	2597	3460	2597				
44													792					556			11765				
45												26									34				
46										13										312		1558			

Table 1 — continued

	500—300	300—100	100—0
<i>Haloptilus oxycephalus</i> Giesbrecht, 1892	+	+	—
<i>Haloptilus ocellatus</i> Wolfenden, 1905	+	+	—
<i>Haloptilus</i> spp. family Acartiidae	—	+	+
<i>Paralabidocera antarctica</i> (Thompson, 1898)	+	+	+
CYCLOPOIDA			
family Oithonidae			
<i>Oithona similis</i> Claus, 1896	+	+	+
<i>Oithona frigida</i> Giesbrecht, 1902	+	+	+
family Oncaecidae			
<i>Oncaea conifera</i> Giesbrecht, 1891	+	+	—
<i>Oncaea curvata</i> Giesbrecht, 1902	+	+	+
<i>Oncaea</i> sp.	+	+	+
<i>Lubbockia aculeata</i> Giesbrecht, 1892	+	+	—
HARPACTICOIDA	—	+	+

numbers of *C. acutus* ($67844 \text{ ind.} \cdot 1000^{-3}$) occurred at station 61 in the 0—100 m layer. High numbers of *C. acutus* were also recorded in the eastern part of the study area, in the off shore surface (0—100 m) waters at Clarence Island (st. 53) and at st. 172 ($20078 \text{ ind.} \cdot 1000^{-3}$). Large concentration of *C. acutus* in this region was due to the presence of a new generation of this species. A distinct increase of numbers of *C. acutus* towards the euphotic zone was recorded. The new generation was dominant in this zone with a prevalence of the II and III copepodite stages to the north (st. 61) and I—II copepodites to the south (st. 174 and 166). The role of the wintering generation dominated by V copepodite stage and by females clearly increased with greater depth (Fig. 2). It seems, that the splitting of the two generations, new and old, considerably diminishes the food competition between both generations.

As in the case of *C. acutus* the largest assemblages of *Rhincalanus gigas* were observed in the northern part of the Drake Passage (st. 61; $6752 \text{ ind.} \cdot 1000^{-3}$ in the 100—0 m). Rather high numbers of *R. gigas* were caused by the appearance of nauplii (Fig. 3). This picture is still not very clear, since this copepod, although it leaves the deeper water at the same time as *C. acutus*, has a rate of movement towards the surface much lower compared with that species (Voronina, Vladimirskaia and Żmijewska 1978). In the whole study area the major part of *R. gigas* population (V copepodite and adults) occurred in the 300—100 m layer (Table 2).

The presence of *Calanus propinquus*, the third of the "interzonal" Antarctic copepods, was marked by much smaller numbers compared with those of the former species. Maximum numbers of *C. propinquus* ($2597 \text{ ind.} \cdot 1000^{-3}$) were recorded from st. 63, in the 300—0 m stratum. Old

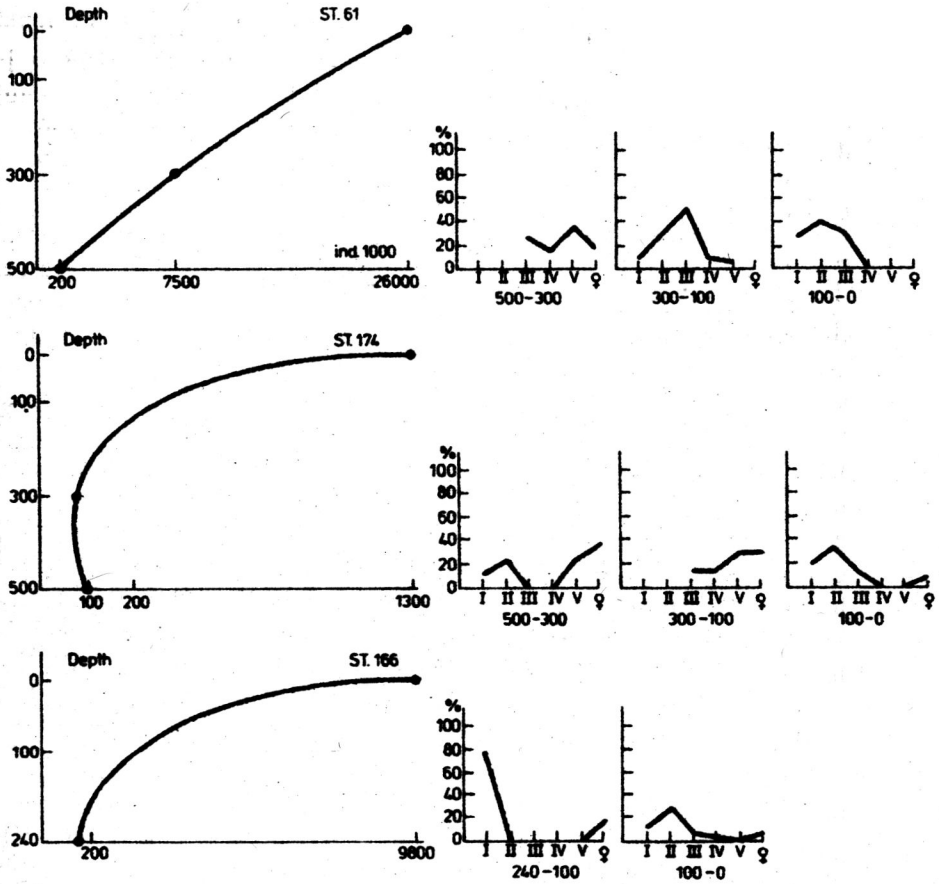


Fig. 2. Vertical distribution and population structure of *Calanoides acutus* in the SIBEX research area

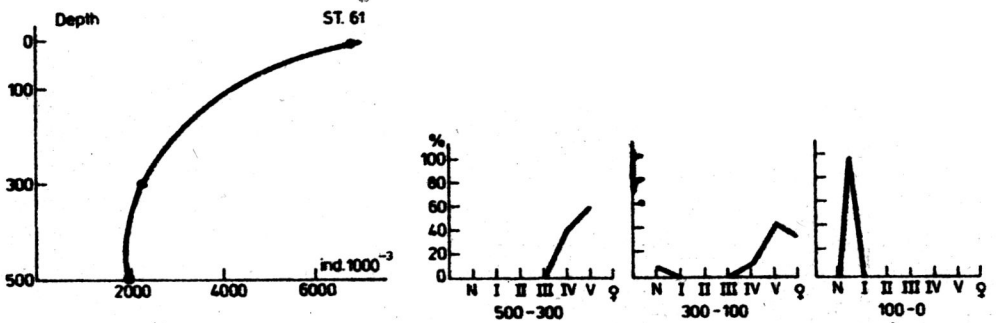


Fig. 3. Vertical distribution and population structure of *Rhinocalanus gigas* in the SIBEX research area

generation was dominant. It was composed mainly of V copepodites, females and to a lesser degree of the IV copepodite stage. In the northern part of the study area only small numbers of the I—III copepodites were caught and at station 65 (300—100 m) a female bearing a spermatophore was found. This showed that the process of fertilization had not yet ended, and the reproduction had just begun.

Metridia gerlachei was characteristic of the pelagic fauna in the Bransfield strait. Its abundance increased from north towards the south of the research area (Table 2). Maximum numbers occurred at st. 146 (12857 ind. $\cdot 1000^{-3}$; 500—300 m). In the whole area this copepod occupied, first of all, the waters below 100 m (Table 2). Similar results of *M. gerlachei* distribution were reported during BIOMASS-FIBEX (Jażdżewski, Kittel and Łotocki 1982). The presence of the first copepodite stages of this species (Fig. 4) indicates an early commencement of the reproduction period compared with that at the end of summer as observed by Vervoort (1965). Also the studies in the coastal zone of the Indian Ocean Sector of the Antarctic revealed the dominance of the III and IV copepodite stages in February, which indicated that reproduction had taken place much earlier (Żmijewska 1983).

The usual constituents of the pelagic fauna in the present study area were also the copepods of the genus *Euchaeta* (Table 2). These typically predacious animals inhabited mainly the 500—300 m water layer. The population consisted mainly of the youngest copepodites I and II, and also of the IV and V-th copepodite stages.

Rather often, but in small quantities, the animals of the genera *Heterorhabdus* and *Haloptilus* were found in deeper water strata (Table 2).

Among the Calanoida with a small body size, *Ctenocalanus vanus* played the most important role both with respect to the numbers of individuals and to the frequency. The population structure of the species was characterized by a high contribution of females and older copepodites, while in the northern area there were copepodites I to III. *Clausocalanus laticeps* was typical of the Drake Passage. *Clausocalanus* sp., and probably mainly *C. laticeps*, was also one of the most frequent copepod species in this area during BIOMASS-FIBEX (Jażdżewski, Kittel and Łotocki 1982). As stated by Vervoort (1965) *C. laticeps* is characteristic of the Subantarctic, however, Ramirez and Dinofiro (1976) found it in large abundance in the Antarctic waters.

Copepods of the genus *Scolecithricella* were the common components of the zooplankton during SIBEX (Table 2). *S. glacialis* was represented by older copepodites, adult forms and by the youngest copepodite stages (Table 2, Copepoda (I—V) — varia).

Rather interesting was the distribution of *Paralabidocera antarctica* which was recorded exclusively from the south-eastern part of the region influenced

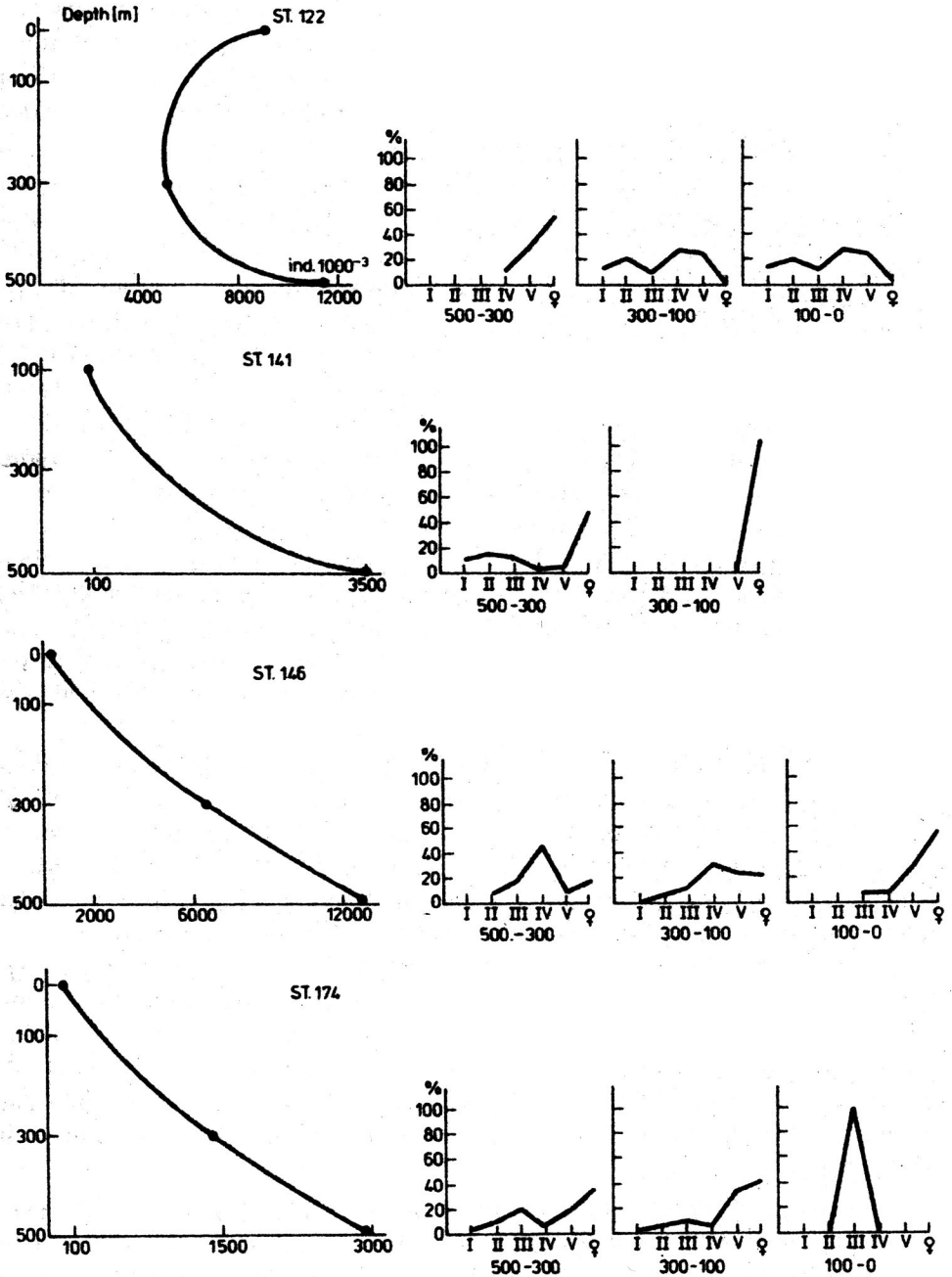


Fig. 4. Vertical distribution and population structure of *Metridia gerlachei* in the SIBEX research area

by an inflow of the Weddell Sea water (Table 2). The population consisted of only adult forms, mainly males, and inhabited the surface waters.

The remaining species of Calanoida occurred irregularly, in small quantities, mainly in the 500—300 m layer (Table 2).

Species of the suborder Cyclopoida were found in greater numbers than any other copepods (see also Rakusa-Suszczewski 1983). Among them *Oithona similis* occurred in the greatest numbers with a maximum of more than 70000 ind. · 1000⁻³ in the northern part of the Drake Passage and in the neritic area of the South Shetlands (about 70000 ind. · 1000⁻³). There was a tendency of the decrease of the abundance with depth as well as to the lower contribution of this species in the south-eastern part of the research area (Table 2). The population structure of *O. similis* was little differentiated with the dominance of IV—V copepodites and adults represented mainly by females; gravid females were absent.

Oithona frigida occurred everywhere, but its greatest aggregation was noted in the Bransfield Strait, with maximum numbers (nearly 40000 ind. · 1000⁻³) at st. 153. The age structure of *O. frigida* did not differ from that of *O. similis*.

Also *Oncaea conifera* belonged to the species which occurred in highest numbers in the Bransfield Strait. Maxima of nearly 13000 ind. · 1000⁻³ were recorded from stations 132 and 143. These copepods concentrated mainly in the 500—300 m layer (Table 2). *O. conifera* was represented by older copepodites and by females and males. Copulating animals were observed in the Drake Passage.

Oncaea curvata was found in the whole area, but was more abundant in the Bransfield Strait. Maximum (more than 30000 ind. · 1000⁻³) was noted at st. 141. Abundance of this species increased with deeper waters, a phenomenon observed also by Jazdzewski, Kittel and Łotocki (1982) during the BIOMASS-FIBEX studies. The population structure was characterized by a high contribution of the adult forms. Also females with spermatophores were encountered which indicated a greater advancement of development as compared to the other representatives of Cyclopoida.

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5. Streszczenie

Materiał stanowiły próby planktonowe zebrane w okresie od 21.12.1983 do 4.01.1984 r. Próby pobierano siecią planktonową typu Nansena, z trzech warstw: 500—300 m, 300—100 m i 100—0 m. Stwierdzono bogaty skład jakościowy (46 taksonów Copepoda) oraz wzrost liczby gatunków wraz z głębokością (Tab. 1). Widłonogi reprezentowane były głównie przez gatunki typowo antarktyczne (*Calanoides acutus*, *Calanus propinquus*, *Rhincalanus gigas*, *Ctenocalanus vanus*). W Cieśninie Drake'a rejestrowano formy subantarktyczne (*Calanus simillimus*, *Metridia lucens*). Z gatunków „interzonalnych” najczęściej i najliczniej występował *C. acutus*, którego największe skupienia stwierdzono w północnej i wschodniej części badanego rejonu (Tab. 2). Wysoka koncentracja tego gatunku we wczesnym okresie wegetacji związana jest z masową obecnością nowego pokolenia. Stwierdzono rozwarstwienie populacji. W górnej warstwie występowała młoda generacja, głębiej — ubiegłoroczna (Rys. 2). *C. propinquus* i *R. gigas* pod względem liczebności jak i stopnia rozwoju ustępowały *C. acutus*. Trzon populacji *R. gigas* znajdował się na głębokości 300—100 m, a najmłodsze pokolenie nowej generacji — nauplii — występowały w warstwie powierzchniowej (Rys. 3). Gatunkiem typowym dla Cieśniny Bransfielda był *Metridia gerlachei* (Tab. 2). Liczebność tego gatunku rosła wraz z głębokością, a obecność kopepoditów I świadczy o zaawansowanym rozwoju nowego pokolenia (Rys. 4). Do typowych form fauny antarktycznej należą: *C. vanus*, a także widłonogi z rodzaju *Scolecithricella* (Tab. 2). Widłonogi z grupy Cyclopoida stanowiły najbardziej reprezentatywny i liczny składnik zooplanktonu (Tab. 2). *Oithona similis* był typowym gatunkiem Cieśniny Drake'a, natomiast *O. frigida* — Cieśniny Bransfielda, podobnie jak *Oncaea conifera* i *O. curvata*. Stwierdzono różnice w rozmieszczeniu pionowym Cyclopoida: górne warstwy wód zasiedlał *O. similis*, głębsze — *O. conifera*. Gatunki z rodzaju *Oncaea* wyprzedzały w rozwoju gatunki z rodzaju *Oithona*.