

ANOMURAN SPECIES (CRUSTACEA, DECAPODA) AND THEIR ECOLOGICAL DISTRIBUTION AT FORTALEZA BAY SUBLITTORAL, UBATUBA, SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL

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ABSTRACT

The composition and distribution of the anomuran species which occur along the non-consolidated sublittoral of Fortaleza bay, Ubatuba, São Paulo, Brazil, were determined. Samplings were monthly carried out from November 1988 to October 1989 in 7 transects of 1 km each using a shrimp fishing boat equipped with two otter-trawls. Seven anomuran species of the families Diogenidae, Paguridae and Porcellanidae were recorded. The most abundant species were *Loxopagurus loxochelis* (Moreira, 1901), *Dardanus insignis* (Saussure, 1858) and *Isocheles sawayai* (Forest & Saint Laurent, 1967). The crabs were found in 11 genera of gastropod shells, with a predominance of *Thais* Röding, 1798 and *Olivancillaria* Orbigny, 1839. The spatial distribution of the anomurans was heterogeneous. The highest incidence of those animals occurring in the transect II is probably associated with the features of bottom sediment.

KEYWORDS. Anomura, ecological distribution, diversity, Brazilian coast.

INTRODUCTION

According to McLAUGHLIN (1983), pagurid crabs comprise more than 800 species in 86 genera and six families being 12 species semiterrestrial and the remainder, marine. They represent a parcel of notorious importance in the intertidal and moderately deep benthic community, where they play an important role in the marine food chain.

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In Brazil, few studies are available on hermit crabs: some dealing with systematics and distribution (FOREST & SAINT LAURENT, 1967; TOMMASI, 1967; NARCHI & HEBLING, 1976; HEBLING & RIEGER, 1986; HEBLING *et al.* 1994); others dealing with larval development (HEBLING & FRANSOZO, 1982; N.-FRANSOZO & HEBLING, 1983 and HEBLING & MANSUR, 1995); and still others are related to shell choice (N.-FRANSOZO *et al.*, 1991a; N.-FRANSOZO & FRANSOZO, 1992; PINHEIRO *et al.*, 1993). A wide study on macrocrustacean from benthic community was carried out in Fortaleza bay (23° 31' S and 45° 09' W), Brazil by N.-FRANSOZO *et al.* (1991b), FRANSOZO *et al.*, 1992; SANTOS *et al.* (1994); MANTELATTO *et al.* (1995) and N.-FRANSOZO & FRANSOZO (1995), in which the brachyurans were emphasized.

The objective of this work was to determine the anomuran crab species occurring along the non-consolidated sublittoral of Fortaleza bay, Ubatuba (SP), and their ecological distribution.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The anomurans were sampled in Fortaleza bay, Ubatuba, São Paulo using a shrimp fishing boat equipped with two otter-trawls, each one measuring 7.5 m in length and 10 mm of cod mesh. Samplings were monthly performed over a 12 months (from November 1988 to October 1989). Each sampling consisted of seven transects of 1 km each (fig. 1). Fortaleza bay has a mean depth of 9 m (4.4 to 13.3 m), and presented the following mean annual values for the hydrologic factors analyzed during the study period: temperature, 23.5°C (21 to 28.1°C); salinity, 34.4‰ (32.4 to 35.6‰), and dissolved oxygen, 5.46 mg/l (4.2 to 6.33 mg/l). The mean annual content of organic matter in the sediment was 4.07% (2.3 to 6.6%) and the granulometric composition of the sediment had, during most seasons, predominance of fine and very fine sand fractions. Mean annual rainfall for the Ubatuba region during the study period was 154.3 mm (27.4 to 282.6 mm). A detailed description of sampling and analysis of environmental factors at Fortaleza bay, in the same period was previously published by N.-FRANSOZO *et al.* (1991b).

The shells genera were identified as indicated by RIOS (1970) and the hermit crabs as indicated by FOREST & SAINT LAURENT (1967) and HEBLING & RIEGER (1986). The biological material is deposited in the scientific collection of the Departamento de Zoologia, Instituto de Biociências, UNESP, Campus de Botucatu. The percentage of association of hermit crabs with the genus of each gastropod shell was determined.

The diversity index of Shannon-Weaver was calculated according to POOLE (1974), where the null hypothesis was $H_1: H_1 = H_2$, and it was tested by a t test ($P < 0.05$). The similarity between the transects was analyzed by the Jaccard index as indicated by KREBS (1989), where the level of significance was set at 5%.

RESULTS

A total of 161 specimens of the infraorder Anomura were recorded. Of these, 126 belonging to the Diogenidae family: *Petrochirus diogenes* (Linné, 1758), *Dardanus insignis* (Saussure, 1858), *Loxopagurus loxochelis* (Moreira, 1901), and *Isocheles sawayai* (Forest & Saint Laurent, 1967). Nineteen specimens are representatives of the family Paguridae: *Pagurus criniticornis* (Dana, 1852) and *Pagurus leptonyx* (Forest & Saint Laurent, 1967). The Porcellanidae were represented only by *Porcellana sayana* (Leach, 1820) with 16 individuals. The absolute abundance of these species (tab. I) shows predominance of diogenids over pagurids and porcellanids. The most abundant species was *L. loxochelis*.

The anomuran species showed differential distribution in the studied area with all the seven recorded species present only in the transect II. The species of

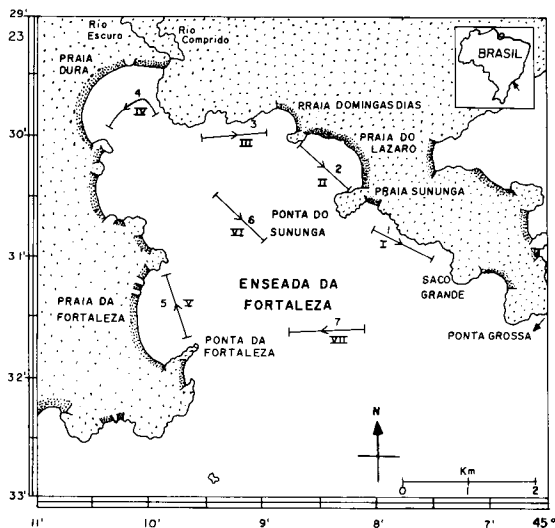


Fig. 1. Fortaleza bay in Ubatuba, São Paulo, showing the position of the sampling transects and stations.

widest spatial distribution was *L. loxochelis* (not detected only in transect VI) followed by *P. sayana*, which was absent in transect IV. All the anomuran species presented discontinuous continuous occurrence along the collecting months.

The most abundant hermit crab species was *L. loxochelis* followed by *D. insignis* and *I. sawyai*. The abundance of the anomuran species was higher in the transects with higher organic matter content (%) (fig. 2).

Eleven gastropod genera shells were found to be inhabited by the hermit crabs (tab. III). The predominant genera were *Thais* Röding, 1798 (32.14 %) and *Olivancillaria* Orbigny, 1839 (27.14 %).

The similarity index (fig. 2) reveals that transects II and V may be grouped.

The diversity index (tab. III) for each transect evidenced slightly differences in relation to hermit crabs. Transects II and V presented the highest diversity index of Shannon-Weaver, where there was no significant difference at the 5% level.

DISCUSSION

The seven sampled areas in the Fortaleza bay were reasonably homogeneous in terms of temperature, salinity and dissolved oxygen (N.-FRANSOZO *et al.*, 1991b). The environmental factors of widest variation, producing ecologically contrasting areas, were depth, granulometric composition, and organic matter content in the sediment. Among them, the sediment features are the most related to the benthic organisms distribution (FRANSOZO *et al.*, 1992).

The heterogeneous distribution of anomurans in the Fortaleza bay with respect to the sampling transects is probably associated with the contrasting levels of organic matter and granulometric composition of the sediment, reflecting specific habitats. The action of organic matter is particularly evident and the abundance of anomurans was negatively correlated with this parameter. This fact

Table I. List of the Anomuran species and number of individuals sampled per transect at Fortaleza bay, SP, from November 1988 to October 1989.

FAMILIES Species	TRANSECTS							Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VI	
DIOGENIDAE								
<i>Loxopagurus loxochelis</i>	22	28	8	4	14	-	2	78
<i>Isocheles sawayai</i>	-	1	1	19	-	-	-	21
<i>Petrochirus diogenes</i>	-	1	-	-	2	2	-	5
<i>Dardanus insignis</i>	3	8	-	2	9	-	-	22
PAGURIDAE								
<i>Pagurus criniticornis</i>	-	13	-	-	-	-	-	13
<i>Pagurus leptonyx</i>	-	3	-	-	2	1	-	6
PORCELLANIDAE								
<i>Porcellana sayana</i>	1	1	1	-	10	1	2	16
Total of species	3	7	3	3	5	3	2	7
Total of individuals	26	55	10	25	37	4	4	161

Table II. Relationship of the hermit crab species with the genera of gastropod shells sampled in Fortaleza Bay, SP, from November 1988 to October 1989. (1 = *Loxopagurus loxochelis*; 2 = *Isocheles sawayai*; 3 = *Petrochirus diogenes*; 4 = *Dardanus insignis*; 5 = *Pagurus criniticornis*; 6 = *Pagurus leptonyx*). The absolute values recorded are given in brackets; 5 of the 145 specimens recorded had no shell.

Hermit crabs Gastropods	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
<i>Fusinus</i> Rafinesque, 1815	-	-	-	-	15.38 (2)	-	1.43 (2)
<i>Olivancillaria</i> Orbigny, 1839	42.46 (31)	23.81 (5)	-	4.55 (1)	7.69 (1)	-	27.14 (38)
<i>Thais</i> Röding, 1798	31.51 (23)	66.67 (14)	-	9.09 (2)	38.45 (5)	16.67 (1)	32.14 (45)
<i>Buccinanops</i> Orbigny, 1841	19.18 (14)	4.76 (1)	-	4.55 (1)	7.69 (1)	66.66 (4)	15.0 (21)
<i>Chiroreus</i> Montfort, 1810	1.37 (1)	-	-	4.55 (1)	23.09 (3)	16.67 (1)	4.29 (6)
<i>Hastula</i> H.&A. Adams, 1853	1.37 (1)	-	-	-	-	-	0.71 (1)
<i>Cerithium</i> Bruguière, 1789	-	-	-	-	7.69 (1)	-	0.71 (1)
<i>Polinices</i> Montfort, 1810	1.37 (1)	-	-	-	-	-	0.71 (1)
<i>Cymatium</i> Röding, 1798	2.74 (2)	4.76 (1)	-	45.44 (10)	-	-	9.29 (13)
<i>Tonna</i> Brunnich, 1772	-	-	40.0 (2)	27.27 (6)	-	-	5.72 (8)
<i>Strombus</i> Linnaeus, 1758	-	-	60.0 (3)	4.55 (1)	-	-	2.86 (4)
Total	73	21	5	22	13	6	140

was observed for *Clibanarius vittatus* (Bosc, 1802), which inhabits areas of muddy sand that accumulate more detrital material, which appears to be a major food source for this species (CAINE, 1980).

A great abundance of *Isocheles sawayai* was observed in transect IV, which is characterized by smaller amounts of organic matter and by lower salinity and depth. Furthermore, the subarea corresponding to this transect presents a predominance of very fine sand (7.58%), a fact that favours greater compacting of the bottom, allowing for animal to stay buried and not to be dragged away, especially in the surf zone. The presence of the species in this subarea may be because this

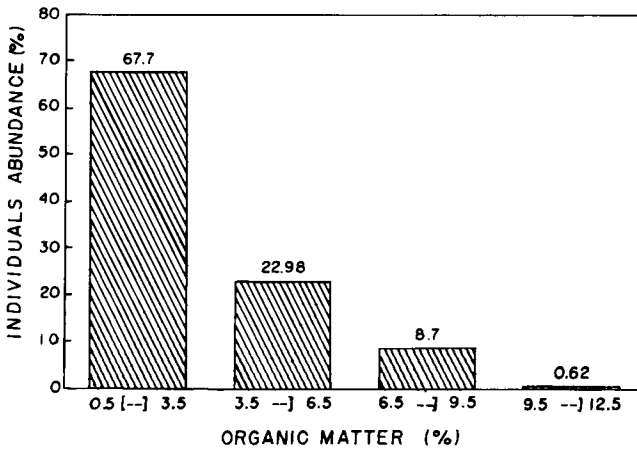


Fig. 2. Relative frequency of hermit crabs as a function of class of organic matter content.

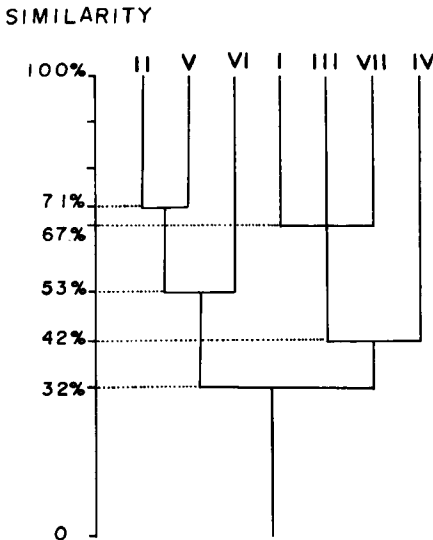


Fig. 3. Dendrogram of similarity between transects obtained by applying the Jaccard index.

hermit crab is a suspension feeder one, which prefers sites with larger amounts of particles in suspension. This species tolerates lower salinity as it is often found near sites influenced by freshwater.

Ovigerous females were detected only in *Loxopagurus loxochelis* (5 specimens), *Petrochirus diogenes* (1 specimen) and *Dardanus insignis* (1 specimen). The

Table III. Diversity index calculated for each transect (N = number of individuals; H and Hmax = Shannon-Weaver index as bits/individual; E = equitability; V = variance).

INDEX	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
N	26	55	10	25	37	4	4
H	0.744	1.936	0.639	1.015	1.992	1.5	1
Hmax	1.585	2.807	1.099	1.585	2.322	1.585	1
E	0.469	0.690	0.582	0.641	0.858	0.946	1
V	0.849	0.608	0.528	0.530	0.94	0.981	0.23

low incidence of ovigerous females suggests a spawning behavior involving differential habitat occupation by those females. N.-FRANZOZO & HEBLING (1983) reported that *Isocheles sawayai* is found in the surf zone during spawning and incubation, a fact explaining the total absence of this species in the sampling transects.

The occupation of gastropod shells of the genera *Thais* and *Olivancillaria* is properly correlated with a greater abundance of these specimens in the area. This occurrence was probably due to the action of local currents and tides. The lower plasticity of shell types may exert pressure on the structure of species populations in the region, as previously observed for other hermit crabs, altering growth rates (WILBER, 1990), aggressiveness (HAZLETT, 1967) and fecundity (BERTNESS, 1981).

According to PIRES (1989) who studied the structure and dynamics of the benthic megafauna at several sites along the continental shelf of the northern region of the State of São Paulo, mollusks represented the third most numerous group in the internal domain, especially in spring, and gastropods were always dominant among them, representing 60 to 73% of the Mollusca fauna sampled. Other areas along the northern littoral of São Paulo State also presented greater abundance of gastropods compared the other groups of the marine malacofauna. This aspect has been well defined in a study on the São Sebastião Canal conducted by MIGOTTO **et al.** (1993). These records may support the relatively successful presence of hermit crabs in the region. According to RITTSCHOFF (1980), hermit crabs can obtain new shells by simply changing them, by finding empty shells or by looking for sites where gastropods are preyed upon by other animals. The first two events seem to occur in Fortaleza bay, but no reports of them exist in the literature. FRANZOZO **et al.** (1992) recorded a great abundance of brachyurans in Fortaleza bay which are known to prey on gastropods (WEAR & HADDON, 1987; CHOY, 1986; HAEFNER, 1990). For instance, a study made by MANTELATTO & PETRACCO (in press) on *Hepatus pudibundus* (HERBST, 1785) diet revealed that Gastropoda were the third item in the feeding preference of these animals.

Analysis of present data suggests that the occurrence and distribution of

anomurans, and hermit crabs in particular, depends not only on favorable environmental factors but also on biogenic factors such as shell availability. These results confirm those obtained also for brachyurans (FRANZOZO *et al.*, 1992), indicating that environmental factors, when acting together, are decisive in the ecological distribution of the benthic organisms.

Application of the similarity index revealed that transects II and V may be grouped because they share a number of species. This fact supports the similarity of these subareas observed by N.-FRANZOZO *et al.* (1991b) at the environmental level.

Recently, HEBLING *et al.* (1994) carried out a similar study in Anchieta Island region, São Paulo State, where 12 anomuran species were recorded, for a total of 323 animals. This fact demonstrates a greater wealth and abundance of anomurans for an area close to Fortaleza bay. Nevertheless, the total diversity index for Fortaleza bay ($H = 2.2388$ bits/ind.; Equitability = 0.7975; Variance = 0.0687) and for Anchieta Island ($H = 2.7481$ bits/ind.; Equitability = 0.7666; Variance = 0.0309) does not differ significantly ($p > 0.05$; $t = 1.61$), which means a similar anomuran composition in neighboring areas monitored at different times. As observed near Anchieta Island and in Fortaleza bay, the geographic position of the transects in relation to the land characterizes different environmental conditions, implying that different influences exist on the distribution of benthic species.

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