

CONTRIBUTION TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF ECHINODERMS
IN THE EASTERN IONIAN SEA

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Abstract. The echinoderm fauna along the Ionian coast of Peloponnese and around Zakynthos and Kephallonia was examined. Samples were taken with a dredge in the infralittoral zone at depths 5 and 15m. 25 species of Echinoderms were identified, comprising: Asteroidea 7sp., Ophiuroidea 8sp., Echinoidea 5sp., Holothurioidea 5sp. The species Leptosynapta gallieni is recorded for the first time in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Résumé. Nous avons examiné la faune des Echinodermes de la Mer Ionienne (côte de Peloponnèse, îles de Zakynthos et de Kephallonia). L'échantillonnage a été effectué avec une drague sur la zone infralittorale entre 5 et 15m. 25 espèces d'échinodermes sont identifiées: Asteroidea 7esp., Ophiuroidea 8esp., Echinoidea 5esp., Holothurioidea 5esp. L'espèce Leptosynapta gallieni est mentionnée pour la première fois en Méditerranée Orientale.

The area of study includes 95 stations, subdivided into three regions: A) West coasts of Peloponnese, B) East coasts of Zakynthos and C) Coasts around Kephallonia. The samples were taken with a Foster's anchor dredge in the infralittoral zone at depths between 5 and 15m. 300 specimens of Echinoderms were found in 72% of the stations, comprising 25 species (Asteroidea 7sp., Ophiuroidea 8sp., Echinoidea 5sp., Holothurioidea 5sp.). In particular, here are reported 13 species for Zakynthos, 16 for the Ionian coasts of Peloponnese and 16 for Kephallonia.

The common species for the 3 regions are the following: Astropecten jonstoni (prevalent in the region A, in 16% of the stations), Asterina gibbosa (prev. in A, 9%), Amphipholis squamata (C, 19%), Amphiura (Acrocnida) brachiata (A, 9%), Echinocardium cordatum (A, 34%) and Holothuria tubulosa (B, 16%).

The species present exclusively in area A were: Astropecten irregularis pentacanthus, A. bispinosus, Ophiura albida, Schizaster canaliferus, Leptosynapta galliennei and Leptosynapta makrankyra. Amphiura mediterranea was found only in area B and 5 species, namely Astropecten platyacanthus, Asterina pancerii, Amphiura filiformis, Trachythyone sp. (juv.) and Genocidaris maculata were found exclusively in area C. The 4 species Ophiomyxa pentagona, Echinocyamus pusillus, Echinocardium mediterraneum and Holothuria helleri were common in the two islands.

From previous studies in the same area by Kilian & Strauss (1981) and by Kaspiris & Tortonese (1982) 23 other species have been identified, so the number of Echinoderms in the Eastern Ionian Sea mounts to 48. The differences between our material and that of the above authors must be attributed to the different zones examined. That is, infralittoral in this study and medio and circalittoral by the other authors.

Among the species identified, we must draw special attention to the Holothurian Leptosynapta galliennei, which is recorded for the first time in the Eastern Mediterranean. In addition, the species Leptosynapta makrankyra, present in our material, is known in the Eastern Mediterranean only from the work of Koukouras and Sinis (1981) in the North Aegean Sea.

References

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