

Variations in the surface and volume of three Diatoms along the Suez Canal

M.-M. DORGHAM, N.-M. DOWIDAR and Y. HALIM

Oceanography Department, Faculty of Science, Alexandria University (Egypt)

The diatoms *Rhizosolenia shrubsolei*, *R. calcar-avis* and *Guinardia flaccida* were chosen to assess the variations in their surface and volume in relation to variations in temperature, salinity and water density. The samples were collected from Suez Bay, Bitter Lake and Port Said in winter and summer 1970. Considering the cell as a closed cylinder, the surface-A and the volume-V for 100 cells of each species from the 3 regions were calculated, based on the length and diameter of the cells.

For *R. shrubsolei*, the A as well as A/V ratio were higher in summer than in winter in Suez Bay and Bitter Lake. Such condition may be related to the decrease of the water density in summer in both regions (Table 1). Otherwise, Port Said population showed smaller A in summer than in winter, but its A/V was higher in summer (Table 1). This may be related to the lower salinity of Port Said and accordingly the A/V must be increased to keep the cell float.

For *R. calcar-avis*, the summer population of Suez Bay was not treated due to its rarity. Population of this species showed more or less different pattern from that of *R. shrubsolei*. In the Bitter Lake and Port Said, the summer A was lower than in winter (Table 1). However, the A/V for the two populations were higher in summer. This behaviour is contrary to that of *R. shrubsolei* and may indicate that the light requirement of *R. calcar-avis* is relatively high and it may proliferate in water of high temperature and high salinity. This may also be in agreement with the ecological affinity of this species as it is a tropical and subtropical species.

Region	Season	Temp.	Salinity	σ_t	A(mm ²) X 10 ⁻⁴	V(mm ³) X 10 ⁻⁶	A/V
Suez Bay	W	15	41.2	30.61	313	137	229
	S	30	41.7	27.01	318	135	236
Bitter Lake	W	14	44.6	33.18	339	148	229
	S	29	45.8	30.39	461	287	161
Port Said	W	15	37	26.76	350	177	198
	S	28.5	38	24.51	240	108	222

R. shrubsolei

	Season	A(mm ²) X 10 ⁻⁴	A(mm ³) X 10 ⁻⁶	A/V	A(mm ²) X 10 ⁻⁴	V(mm ³) X 10 ⁻⁶	A/V
Suez Bay	W	800	843	94	215	193	111
	S	-	-	-	211	195	108
Bitter Lake	W	1192	1521	78	291	308	94
	S	818	735	111	159	112	142
Port Said	W	1091	1409	77	248	261	95
	S	512	450	114	273	254	108

R. calcar-avis

Guinardia flaccida

Table 1- Temperature, salinity, water density and average surface and volume of the 3 diatom species in the 3 regions in winter (W) and summer (S).

For *Guinardia flaccida*, spatial variations of A were more pronounced than the seasonal variations. However, in the Bitter Lake, the A as well as A/V were remarkably higher in winter than in summer and in the mean time, the summer A was the lowest for the 3 regions in both seasons (Table 1). This may indicate that *Guinardia flaccida*, a south temperate species probably does not prefer the very surface water of the Bitter Lake with high temperature, salinity and illumination, particularly in summer; it therefore may sink down.

Thus the 3 diatom species showed more or less different pattern of seasonal and spatial variations of the A and A/V. These variations may be related to the variations in temperature, salinity and water density as well as specific gravity and ecological affinities of the different species. The interaction between these factors leads to increase or decrease in the surface and volume of the cells in order to keep their floating level.