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The Species Composition of the Peracarid Fauna (Crustacea, Malacostraca) of the Northeast Water Polynya (Greenland)

*Angelika Brandt, Stella Vassilenko,
Dieter Piepenburg & Michael Thurston*



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Contents

Introduction	3
Study area	4
Material and methods	6
Sampling	6
Data analysis	15
Results	15
Species composition	15
Abundance, diversity, and zonation	15
Peracarid communities	21
Discussion	21
Sampling gear	21
Species composition, zoogeography, diversity ..	21
Species assemblages	23
Abiotic and biotic parameters	24
Conclusion	25
Acknowledgements	26
References	27

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The species composition of Crustacea, Peracarida was investigated over a period of almost three months in the Northeast Water Polynya (NEW) off Greenland. Samples were collected in May - July 1993 during the *Polarstern* expedition ARK IX/2-3 using an epibenthic sledge. Within the macrobenthos on the shelf, peracarids were an important component, besides polychaetes, molluscs and brittle stars. At 22 stations in depths from 45-517 m, about 38 000 specimens were identified and have been listed. In total, 229 species belonging to 51 families, and 121 genera were found. Seven species assemblages were characterized: the "deep assemblage", the "shallow assemblage", the "Westwind Trough assemblage", the "Norske Trough assemblage", the "common species assemblage", the "high-accumulation area assemblage", and the "ice-associate assemblage". Differences in abundance and composition do *not* primarily reflect bathymetric gradients, but more the availability of food (phytoplankton, more importantly ice algae incorporation into the sediment) and therefore the temporal and spatial opening of the polynya. It is suggested that primary production, hydrography, and ice conditions (lateral advection due to the anticyclonic gyre around Belgica Bank, and upwelling at a southern fast-ice extension) are the main factors influencing the peracarid crustacean community.

Keywords: Greenland, Crustacea, Peracarida, taxonomy, biogeography, species composition, peracarid assemblages, benthic-pelagic coupling.

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Introduction

The hydrography of the northeastern Greenland Sea is strongly influenced by cold polar water flowing from the Arctic Ocean along the Greenland coast to the south (Machoczek 1989; Birgisdottir 1990). The environmental conditions are characterized by very low, but relatively constant water temperatures, long periods of ice cover, large seasonal fluctuations in light regime and, hence, generally only low biological activity (Hempel 1985). However, recent investigations have shown that benthic communities can be surprisingly rich, both in biomass and diversity, at various locations on the Greenland shelf as well as on the continental and mid ocean

ridge slopes (Brandt 1993; Brandt & Piepenburg 1994; Piepenburg 1988; Piepenburg & v. Juterzenka 1994; Svavarsson et al. 1990). These communities are thought to be nourished by the temporarily high surplus of sympagic and/or pelagic production in the marginal ice zones and polynya regions of the East Greenland Current (Piepenburg 1988).

Seasonally sedimented fresh phytodetritus in the deep sea has been observed (Billett et al. 1983) and strongly pulsed sedimentation events of organic material from the ice-edges or open water to the bottom have been postulated (Hebbeln & Wefer 1991). The seasonal input of organic carbon has a direct effect on benthic communities (Graf 1989, 1992; Carey 1991; Grebmeier et

al. 1988; Suess 1980). The bulk of suspended matter is accumulated in the benthic nepheloid layer (BNL) and advected, mostly by topography-driven currents in certain depth zones to the areas of eventual deposition (Wainwright 1990; Graf 1992).

The aim of the International Arctic Polynya Program (working platforms "Polarstern" and "Polar Sea") is to focus on critical roles polynyas may play in the dynamics of the Arctic environment, especially with regard to the identification of biological and chemical processes of the carbon flow (Deming 1993). The international interdisciplinary study on Polarstern (ARK IX/2-3) will contribute to this aim.

To assess the relationship between quality and quantity of sedimentation and benthic response, a meso-scale study was undertaken in the NEW Polynya (Deming 1993; Hirche & Kattner 1994). The study was carried out by an international team, part of which was a group working for a multidisciplinary research programme of the University of Kiel (Sonderforschungsbereich 313). A major objective of our programme is to assess the interrelationships between benthic community patterns and particle flux from the seafloor, and sediment-water interface into the near bottom BNL (Graf 1992). Endobenthic and epibenthic mega- and macrofauna organisms play a significant role in this feedback system, although their abundance is lower than that of meiobenthos. The impact of these animals on the micro-scale environment by bioturbation, bio-irrigation, habitat diversification etc. is substantial (Romero-Wetzel & Gerlach 1991; Gage & Tyler 1991; Barthel, 1992). However, the smaller macrofauna (≤ 0.5 mm) has been neglected in many previous investigations, in part because of methodological problems.

The present paper focusses on the peracarid crustaceans (Amphipoda, Cumacea, Isopoda, Mysidacea, Tanaidacea), which are common and important macrobenthic organisms, occurring from shallow habitats to the abyssal plains in high abundance and diversity (Grassle & Maciolek 1992). Extensive faunistic surveys of individual taxa in northern seas are scarce, although the bathyal and abyssal macrofauna has been investigated in detail in many parts of the North Atlantic (e.g. Grassle & Maciolek 1992; Harrison 1988; Hessler 1970; Hessler & Sanders 1967; Sanders et al. 1965; Sanders & Hessler 1969). Qualitative data are available for some macrobenthic taxa from the deep Norwegian and Greenland Seas and from the Arctic Ocean (e.g. Dahl et al. 1976; Gurjanova 1930, 1933, 1946, 1964; Hansen 1916; Sars 1885; Svavarsson 1982, 1984 a, b, 1987 a, b, 1988 a, b; Svavarsson et al. 1990), in addition to previous extensive faunistic works on the Greenland continental shelf (e.g. Ahrens 1994; Bertelsen 1937; Heegaard 1941; Madsen 1936; Piepenburg 1988; Spärck 1933; Stephensen 1943, 1944; Thorson 1933, 1934, 1936). The present study on the species composition, distribution, abundance, and diversity of peracarid crustaceans aims to investigate the influence the NEW Polynya may

have on the epibenthic peracarid fauna. The main aspects considered in this survey are 1) the diversity of the peracarid fauna (species list, which will be the basis for the community analysis); 2) a community analysis using multivariate statistics to distinguish species groups, allowing the description of the spatial distribution of the fauna; 3) the characteristic features of the different species assemblages based on composition and abundance; 4) probable factors influencing the described zonation (sediment, temperature, depth, food supply).

Usage of the term "community" follows the concept of Mills (1969).

Study area

The North East Water polynya (NEW) is an ice-free area south of Kronprins Christian Land, East Greenland. It is regarded as the northernmost of a series of polynyas occurring along this coast (Vinje 1970, 1984). It opens annually and has been reported to do so at least since the beginning of the present century (Koch 1945). The NEW can cover 40,000-44,000 km² (Parkinson et al. 1987; Schneider & Budéus 1994; Wadhams 1981). It begins to open in April or May, persists throughout the summer and starts closing in September. The NEW lies over much of the northern part of the Belgica Bank. The Bank has a complicated topography, and is delineated by the surrounding trough system comprising Belgica Trough, Norske Trough and Westwind Trough (Fig. 1). Depths on Belgica Bank can be as shallow as 25 m, whereas soundings exceed 300 m in the troughs and reach 500 m in Belgica Trough (Schneider & Budéus 1994). To the north, the NEW is bordered by Kronprins Christian Land and the Ob Bank. The western part of the NEW extends into two fjords, the northern Ingølsfjord and the more southerly Dijnmpna Sound. South of these, over the Norske Trough at about 79°N, a distinct extension of fast ice is present, possibly grounded on the very shallow Belgica Bank (Schneider & Budéus 1994). Fjord complexes are found frequently in Greenland, and can be rather large. They are quite variable and can be distinguished by morphological and hydrographical characteristics, which have been shown to influence the distribution and composition of the benthic community (Wesenberg-Lund 1950). Recent investigations indicate a northward coastal current, which is part of an anticyclonic gyre over the Belgica Bank (Bourke et al. 1987; Schneider & Budéus 1994; Rumohr, pers. comm.), instead of an overall southward circulation along the coast.

The hydrography is characterized by two main water layers in the NEW Polynya. The upper cold, low salinity Polar Water (PW) (Bourke et al. 1987; Budéus et al. 1993), extends to about 100 m depth and is characterized by a salinity of 34.4 (Hopkins 1991). Underneath this layer, a gradual rise in temperature and salinity oc-

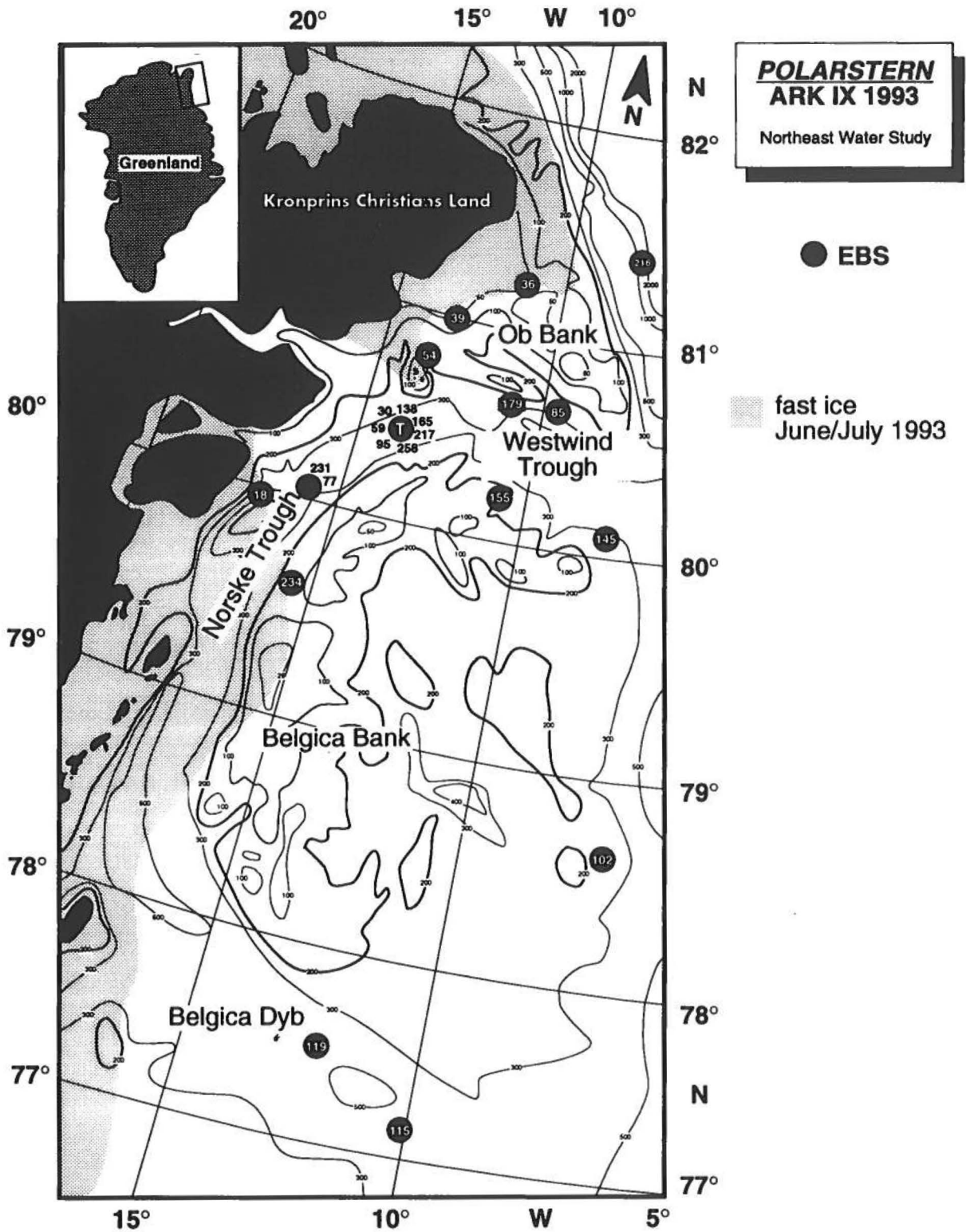


Figure 1. Bathymetry of the NEW Polynya and positions of the EBS-stations sampled during ARK IX/2 and 3.

curs with increasing depth to about 0.7-0.8°C and 34.8 respectively (Schneider & Budéus 1994). Conditions below 300 m are homogenous. This fairly stable vertical layering probably is due to both sea ice melting and run-off from land. Schneider & Budéus (1994) postulate development of plankton blooms, especially in the northern part of the NEW. Pelagic and benthic biomass were higher in the polynya than in the surrounding area (Hirche & Bohrer 1987; Hirche et al. 1991; Piepenburg 1988; present investigation).

Material and methods

Sampling

This investigation is based on material collected in the Northeast Water Polynya (NEW) 1993, off Greenland during the expedition on RV "Polarstern" (ARK IX/2-3) from May to early August (Table 1). Twentytwo hauls, of which 20 were successful, were made with an epibenthic sledge (EBS) (Rothlisberg & Pearcy 1977), modified after Buhl-Jensen (1986) and Brattegard and Fosså (1991), which carries a sampling box in the middle position within the frame. The opening, 100 cm wide and 33 cm high, extend from 27 to 60 cm above the bottom. A plankton net of 0.5 mm mesh size with a cod end of 0.3 mm mesh was used. The mouth of the net is closed by a door during deployment and recovery. The door is

Table 1. Station list of the expedition ARK IX (2 and 3) with RV *Polarstern* to the NEW Polynya, off northeast Greenland.

Station	Date	Latitude (N)	Longitude (W)	Depth (m)	haul length (m)
18	5/27/1993	79°54.78-79°54.63	16°58.29-16°58.70	310	366
36	6/3/1993	80°25.30-80°25.27	13°47.44-13°48.65	45	339
39	6/4/1993	80°39.93-80°39.73	12°34.82-12°34.91	50	469
54	6/7/1993	80°44.84-80°45.06	13°42.27-13°42.59	174	443
77	6/12/1993	80°04.73-80°04.55	15°44.04-15°44.23	425	361
85	6/14/1993	80°35.34-80°35.19	09°18.58-09°17.61	270	413
T 95	6/17/1993	80°27.11-80°27.00	13°25.24-13°24.12	315	357
102	6/20/1993	78°38.41-78°38.28	06°59.47-06°59.00	232	351
115	6/30/1993	77°10.00-77°09.80	10°28.20-10°28.80	492	490
119	7/9/1993	77°43.24-77°43.09	14°07.32-14°07.61	377	338
T 138	7/5/1993	80°29.02-80°29.10	13°38.18-13°36.90	314	383
145	7/8/1993	80°01.73-80°01.65	06°44.65-06°43.55	310	339
155	7/11/1993	80°06.89-80°06.86	10°41.71-10°42.62	186	308
T 165	7/12/1993	80°28.06-80°27.88	13°36.64-13°37.06	320	406
179	7/14/1993	80°36.56-80°36.38	11°17.20-11°17.98	260	431
216	7/19/1993	81°12.65-81°12.45	08°42.21-08°42.69	517	420
T 217	7/19/1993	80°27.28-80°27.29	13°33.87-13°33.02	328	289
231	7/22/1993	80°04.27-80°04.13	15°45.59-15°45.83	411	305
234	7/22/1993	79°56.47-79°56.27	15°02.37-15°02.25	180	388
T 258	7/26/1993	80°27.01-80°26.85	13°36.85-13°36.70	326	308

(T) time series station

(*) Ritzrau, after Ahrens (1994)

(+) data from Ahrens (% Vol) (1994)

* not measured

SWT - surface water temperature (°C)

(psu) - salinity (‰)

BWT - bottom water temperature (°C)

curr. vel. - current velocity (cm/s)

foraminifera >63 µm(Ind./ 10ccm)

Abund. - number of peracarid specimens (values normalized to 1000 m hauls)

S - number of peracarid species

opened mechanically on bottom contact and reclosed by means of springs when the sledge leaves the sea-floor.

Although the sledge is designed to sample the water column just above the sediment, observations by scuba divers have revealed that the water below the opening is also sampled, because of the turbulences in front of the gear (Buhl-Jensen 1986). This explains why epifauna constitutes the bulk of the EBS samples.

The sledge was hauled over the ground for 10 min at a mean velocity of about one knot. The haul distances were calculated on the basis of the GPS derived positions of the ship at start and end of the haul (Brandt 1993; Brattegard, pers. comm.).

The area swept was calculated by multiplying the distance travelled by the net width. As the haul distances

varied (see Table 1), abundances were calculated for a standardized 1000 m haul (Basford et al. 1989; Brandt 1993; Svavarsson et al. 1990).

The positions of EBS stations sampled are documented in Fig. 1 and Table 1. The station indicated with a "T" is a time-series-station, which was visited seven times at approximately 10 day intervals during the period of three months. The EBS catches of sts. 30 and 59 (same locality as station 95) were not quantitative. The qualitative data are considered in the results (Tables 2 and 3), but not presented in figures and species analyses.

When the sledge reached the deck of the vessel, the samples were sieved through a 0.3 mm screen and preserved in 4% buffered formaldehyde solution. After three days the samples were washed and transferred into

S	Abund.	SWT	(psu)	BWT (*)	curr. vel. (*)	sand (+)	silt (+)	# (+)
73	3456	-1.5	*	*	*	*	*	*
42	4803	-1.3	*	*	n.v	*	*	*
48	7146	-1.1	*	*	*	*	*	*
53	1752	-0.8	*	*	*	*	*	*
61	3143	-1.0	*	*	*	*	*	*
66	4607	-1.5	*	*	*	*	*	*
82	8898	-0.9	*	0.7	0.4	10	88	236
90	4355	-1.1	*	*	*	*	*	*
44	481	-1.5	32.13	0.8	26.0	1	97	172
40	757	-1.3	*	1.1	23.5	4	96	166
79	5610	0.1	*	0.7	8.5	*	*	117
75	3952	0.6	31	0.4	7.1	10	89	155
85	11666	-1.4	30.96	-0.2	21.0	6	93	364
79	9524	4.3	32.35	0.5	14.9	10	84	177
82	15796	-0.2	31.39	0.4	6.5	20	78	507
35	307	1.0	*	*	*	*	*	*
64	5688	1.4	*	0.5	6.4	9	86	141
73	4024	1.3	*	*	*	4	95	139
73	3954	0.6	32.42	*	2.9	28	67	424
84	5427	-0.1	32.16	0.6	10.4	11	69	291

Station	18	30	36	39	54	59	77	85	95	102	115	119	138	145	155	165	179	216	217	231	234	258	
Taxa																							
Amphipoda																							
Ampeliscidae																							
<i>Ampelisca eschrichti</i>				4				44		14				18	19	2	67		10		15	7	
<i>Ampelisca latipes</i>									6	9			3					5					
<i>Ampelisca sp.</i>					2		6			3			13				7				3		
<i>Byblis abyssii</i>										3													
<i>Byblis gaimardi</i>			133	134					11	17			3	6	84		204		3		113	16	
<i>Byblis longicornis</i>																7							
<i>Byblis sp.</i>					2			2		3													
<i>Haploops sp.</i>									6	3	2		3	6		5							
<i>Haploops setosa</i>									14	3				3							3		
<i>Haploops sibirica</i>																						10	
<i>Haploops tubicola</i>					2		3	10		6		3					21		3				
Amphilocheidae																							
<i>Amphiochopsis hamatus</i>	3		3				28	58	3			8	6	57		27	2		7			13	
<i>Amphiochopsis sp. A</i>									213							6							
<i>Amphiochus tenuimanus</i>					47																		
<i>Gitanopsis arctica</i>				113																			
<i>Gitanopsis bispinosa</i>																						6	
<i>Gitanopsis inermis</i>			6																				
Aoridae																							
<i>Autonoe sp.</i>				2	11																		
<i>Unciola laticornis</i>														3									
<i>Unciola planipes</i>									11	3			29							38		7	
Astyridae																							
<i>Astyra abyssii</i>				9			22	3	3						19		28		10			3	
<i>Parastyra longipes</i>															2								
Atylidae																							
<i>Atylus smitti</i>			221	136										3	3								
Calliopidae																							
<i>Amphithopsis longicaudata</i>																						33	
<i>Halirages elegans</i>												3	3				5		10				
<i>Halirages fulvocincta</i>	596	3							70				91		6	79	79		17	20		29	
<i>Halirages quadridentatus</i>	66						17		3							7				7		23	
<i>Haliragoides inermis</i>					7			31		3				3	3							7	
<i>Calliopidae sp.</i>				2				1					3		23							13	
Caprellidae																							
<i>Aeginina aenigmatica</i>			3					31									5						
<i>Aeginina longicornis</i>			12	80	2			2	6						36	5							
<i>Caprella microtuberculata</i>							3																
Cressidae																							
<i>Cressa dubia</i>							6														3		

Table 2. List of all peracarid species sampled with an epibenthic sledge in the NEW Polynya. Abundance figures are catch numbers normalized to a 1000 m haul. This species list includes the "time-series-stations" 30 and 59 (for locality see Fig. 1), which are not quantitative, as the EBS was blocked during these hauls. However, the qualitative data are presented here.

	Station	18	30	36	39	54	59	77	85	95	102	115	119	138	145	155	165	179	216	217	231	234	258	
Taxa																								
Epimeridae																								
<i>Epimeria loricata</i>		3							5	8	3			8			2				3	3	3	
<i>Paramphithoe hystrix</i>					6																			
<i>Paramphithoe</i> sp.					8											3								
<i>Spindlerella groenlandica</i>																	17					21	26	
Eusiridae																								
<i>Eusirus cuspidatus</i>								3																
<i>Eusirus holmi</i>		5																			3			3
<i>Eusirus leptocarpus</i>										95												3		
<i>Eusirus longipes</i>																						23		
<i>Eusirus propinquus</i>								8					12		3		10							16
<i>Eusirus</i> sp.								8				4		3										
<i>Rhachotropis aculeata</i>																						3		
<i>Rhachotropis helleri</i>						2		14	395		6				142	36	5	216						3
<i>Rhachotropis inflata</i>																								7
<i>Rhachotropis leucophthalma</i>								2									7							
<i>Rhachotropis lomonosovi</i>		5								11		4	9	3	24		39		10	38				16
<i>Rhachotropis macropus</i>		8								39	225			3									209	
<i>Rhachotropis oculata</i>				112	284																			
<i>Rhachotropis</i> sp.		3				16					63			13	38		17	28		7				3
Hyperidae																								
<i>Hyperoche</i> sp.																3								
Iphimediidae																								
<i>Acanthonotozoma cristatum</i>								6						5								7		
<i>Acanthonotozoma serratum</i>																	10							
<i>Acanthonotozoma sinuatum</i>					2				7					8	3									
<i>Acanthonotozoma</i> sp.									2					8				5						
Isaeidae																								
<i>Protomeeia fasciata</i>				139	53					6	6			5		496		21						
Ischyroceridae																								
<i>Erichthonius</i> sp.					2		17	2			3					341	20	46					10	10
<i>Erichthonius tolli</i>				6																				
<i>Ischyrocerus brevicornis</i>															3									
<i>Ischyrocerus megacheir</i>					2												3	2				13		
Liljeborgiidae																								
<i>Idunella aequicornis</i>		3				7		6	7	39	14	6		39	56	6	5	14		10			64	26
<i>Liljeborgia fissicornis</i>					6											3							3	
Lysianassidae																								
<i>Anonyx liljeborgi</i>																16	9	2					3	13
<i>Anonyx nugax</i>					62	927			7	3	20		6		12	139	5	269		52	39	39		6
<i>Aristias tumidus</i>																	7							
<i>Hippomedon holbolli</i>										3	6				15									

Station	18	30	36	39	54	59	77	85	95	102	115	119	138	145	155	165	179	216	217	231	234	258	
Taxa																							
Phoxocephalidae																							
<i>Harpinia mucronata</i>			3					7	106	74	10		21		16		100				53		23
<i>Harpinia pectinata</i>									8														
<i>Harpinia serrata</i>					23																		
<i>Harpinia sp.</i>							3		28	31			21	3	448	10	169		10		31		46
<i>Paraphoxus oculatus</i>					20			5							107								3
Pleustidae																							
<i>Neopleustes pulchellus</i>								29		3			11	71	52		53		3				7
Podoceridae																							
<i>Dulichia sp.</i>				62											23								13
<i>Dulichia tuberculata</i>									14												49	3	
<i>Dulichioipsis macera</i>							3	2				6	8			10							
<i>Dulichioipsis nordlandicus</i>																							10
<i>Dulichioipsis sp.</i>	3						39		3				13				7		7				
Pontoporellidae																							
<i>Pontoporeia femorata</i>					5																		
Stegocephalidae																							
<i>Andaniella pectinata</i>									8						107						59	3	
<i>Andaniexis abyssi</i>				25				34	39	9	8	41	115	21		106	58	5	211				85
<i>Phippsia romeri</i>	8		3				52																
<i>Phippsiella minima</i>	11																						3
<i>Phippsiella similis</i>								12															
<i>Stegocephalus inflatus</i>					11				34	9					42		35						5
<i>Stegocephalus sp.</i>			6	2										9									98
Stenothoidae																							
<i>Metopa alderi</i>										3												7	
<i>Metopa boeckii</i>														27									
<i>Metopa cf. longicornis</i>										3													
<i>Metopa cf. robusta</i>	2			70				5							2								
<i>Metopa sp.</i>		3	92	342			3	65	17	6	2		3		8	10	46			3	13	3	16
<i>Proboloides schokalskii</i>														3									
<i>Torometopa sp.</i>	6			25				5							6								
Synopiidae																							
<i>Syrrhoë crenulata</i>	22		599	255	38			5	8	3				3	84		25						52
Amphipoda indet.					5				107	746	4		251		169						249		78
Cumacea																							
Diastylidae																							
<i>Brachydiastylis nimia</i>	3				6		11	220	67	686	26	6	34	142	382	214	818	2	90	108	304	68	
<i>Brachydiastylis resima</i>				70																			
<i>Diastylis echinata</i>	3											3											
<i>Diastylis glabra</i>										105													
<i>Diastylis goodsiri</i>				25											3								10

Taxa	Station	18	30	36	39	54	59	77	85	95	102	115	119	138	145	155	165	179	216	217	231	234	258
Desmosomatidae																							
<i>Cryodesma agnari</i>			6							14	9			18		13		2					3
<i>Desmosoma lineare</i>							4																10
<i>Desmosoma stroembergi</i>	19								27	98	37	2		39	32	23	76	56		17		52	23
<i>Eugerdia arctica</i>	3			107	2		30				9						12	2					
<i>Eugerdia reticulata</i>							3				3	4			44			58				42	
<i>Eugerdella cf. armata</i>																							10
<i>Eugerdella hessleri</i>		3						3	9	87	3	2		44	21	3	185	12		38	3	13	55
<i>Oecidiobranchnus nansenii</i>							6	2			54			13	3	84	37	53		7	36	28	
<i>cf. Oecidiobranchnus plebejum</i>																							3
<i>Pseudomesus brevicornis</i>	16										3											3	
<i>Whoia dumbshafensis</i>	19			11						8				34		6	57	5		3		5	10
Eurycopidae																							
<i>Baeonectes muticus</i>	14		3	49					22		170					188		364	2				26
<i>Eurycope brevirostris</i>	88		6				1193	615	1455	487	20			128	637	10	1069	188	10	228	324	5	390
<i>Eurycope inermis</i>	63			11			282	189	624	65	14	53	34	65	143	554	426	32	356	538	5	787	
<i>Eurycope producta</i>	197						8	36	62	9	6	6	39	106	52	57	148	2	24	3	31	107	
<i>Munnopsurus giganteus</i>								2	6	3			12	13	9	6	12	28	7	28	32		33
<i>Tythocope megalura</i>	3																						
Gnathilidae																							
<i>Gnathia elongata</i>		3		36					19	143				86	27		71	47					29
<i>Gnathia hirsuta</i>						2																	
<i>Gnathia stygia</i>							64		46		92										72		23
<i>Praniza sp.</i>	90												44			16			5	45			
Haploniscidae																							
<i>Haploniscus bicuspis</i>	52						8					2										49	
<i>Haploniscus ingolfi</i>												2					5						
Ilyarachnidae																							
<i>Echinozone arctica</i>	16			9			22		14					13	6	26	20	86	2	14	62	5	42
<i>Ilyarachna bergendali</i>	44	3					61	29	152	117	6			201	15	88	397	399	27	24	361	10	46
<i>Ilyarachna dubia</i>											2			3									13
<i>Ilyarachna hirticeps</i>	85						3		59	49	12	18	39	6	10	89	88	10	35			118	49
<i>Ilyarachna torleivi</i>	60			2			6	5	372	57				34		117	51	169		31	3	18	81
Ischnomesidae																							
<i>Ischnomesus norvegicus</i>				2							3								2				5
Janiridae																							
<i>Jaera sp.</i>									25														7
<i>Thambema cf. amicornum</i>	27																						
Katianiridae																							
<i>Katianira bilobata</i>	315										3									5		16	
Macrostylidae																							
<i>Macrostylis subinermis</i>	33										3											3	

Station	18	30	36	39	54	59	77	85	95	102	115	119	138	145	155	165	179	216	217	231	234	258	
Taxa																							
Munnidae																							
<i>Munna acanthifera</i>	115						61	58		34		6	110	53		16	443		35	98	3	91	
<i>Munna boeckii</i>					9																		
<i>Munna groenlandica</i>			555	164				5									2						
<i>Munna hanseni</i>	227				5		3	36	143	9	4		180	68	39	337	109	2	128	32	10	20	
<i>Munna minuta</i>														3									
Munnopsidae																							
<i>Munnopsis typica</i>	19		3	2	45		3	75	33			3	5	71	146	52	447	10	31		5	26	
Nannoniscidae																							
<i>Nannoniscella groenlandica</i>	8						6			3				3	26		102					5	
<i>Nannoniscoides angulatus</i>	79								90	17			41		23							52	3
<i>Nannoniscus arcticus</i>									90				26			66			14	13	18	20	
<i>Nannoniscus armatus</i>										17													
<i>Nannoniscus equiremis</i>						2												2					
<i>Nannoniscus reticulatus</i>	192									23	2							2					
<i>Nannoniscus cf. spinicomis</i>	8																						
Myoidacea																							
Myidae																							
<i>Ambylops abbreviata</i>	3						44	2	92			18	13	6	16	222	2	25	273	82		39	
<i>Boreomysis arctica</i>																					3		
<i>Erythrope abyssorum</i>									123									15					
<i>Erythrope erythroptalma</i>	27			21	187				1130	585	382		9	290	437	1424	155	1049	2	156	3	873	88
<i>Erythrope glacialis</i>	36						227	12				160	55			933	2	2	435	197		270	
<i>Meterythrope robusta</i>				11																			
<i>Parerythrope spectabilis</i>	38						108			3	35	18	28	3	29	10	7		17	101		3	
<i>Pseudomma frigidum</i>				2			172	34	104	231	76	148	21	32	52	305	7	37	892	190	10	540	
Tanaldacea																							
Tanaldidae																							
<i>Cryptocope arctica</i>	22						6	5						3	26	10	5				13	5	
<i>Cryptocope cf. arctophylax</i>																					79		
<i>Leptognathia longiremis</i>	68			41	5		14		28	6	2		3	3	1498	2	25	5		7	33		
<i>cf. Neotanais giganteus</i>										3													
<i>cf. Neotanais serratispinosus</i>																			2				
<i>Pseudotanais macrocheles</i>	63	6	26		2		30	36	65	74	2		50	21	272	118	172	5	31	154	26	94	
<i>Sphyrapus anomalous</i>			3		5	2	3	2	20	9	6	6	16	6	3	2	16		10	16	18		
<i>cf. Taenella ochracea</i>																					13		

70 % ethanol. For faunistic comparison of the 22 stations the complete samples were analysed.

In addition a CTD, Agassiz trawl, box corer, multicorer, bottom water sampler and bongo net were employed at almost all EBS stations providing measures of environmental parameters which helped to explain the variation in abundance and diversity at the different stations.

Data analysis

The peracarid crustacean species caught are summarized in Table 2. For differentiation of distinct species assemblages according to the pattern of their co-occurrences (R-mode) an explorative statistical approach as proposed by Field et al. (1982) was applied. The multivariate data set was double-square-root transformed and subjected to both classification and ordination analyses, i.e. agglomerative hierarchical cluster analysis (Piepenburg and Piatkowski 1992; Romesburg 1984) and non-metric multidimensional scaling (Kruskal & Wish 1978; Wilkinson et al. 1983), respectively.

Species occurring at less than two stations or with less than 5% relative dominance at any one station were excluded from community analyses to minimize stochastic bias of the distribution pattern by random occurrences of rare species. The Bray-Curtis coefficient (Bray & Curtis 1957) was used as parameter of species resemblance both for classification and ordination. For the computation of similarities between any two clusters the "Unweighted Pair-Group Method using Arithmetic Averages" (UPGMA) has been used.

The multivariate pattern in terms of species similarities was depicted by dendrograms for cluster analysis and ordination biplots for multidimensional scaling. Based on discontinuities recognized in these graphical representations of the overall resemblance patterns distinct species assemblages were arbitrarily differentiated and marked.

Abundance and constancy of peracarid species in the assemblages were summarized using mean numbers, presence at stations, maximum numbers of individual species caught and a "Biological Index" (McCloskey, 1970; Table 3). The latter is a measure of species importance combining aspects of constancy and dominance. It is computed for each species over n stations by summing scores X in the range from 10 to 1 which are attributed to each species according to its abundance rank R_j at each of the n stations concerned. When standardized to its theoretical maximum ($10n$) and multiplied by 100 the range of this index is from 0 to 100:

$$B1 = \left(\left(\sum_{j=1}^n X(R_j) \right) / 10n \right) 100$$

Numbers of individuals of the 45 species which attained 5% dominance at one or more stations, and which were included in the community analysis, are listed in Tables 3 and 4. The geographical and bathymetric extent of assemblages were based on groupings identified by classification and ordination (Q mode) (see Brandt 1995) in conjunction with the species groupings obtained by the same methodology in this paper. Within each cluster, total number of individuals in station groups, or at single stations if more appropriate, were examined. Because clusters were very unequal in terms of number of individuals, a similar exercise was conducted using the mean number of individuals averaged over all 20 quantitative stations and all clustered species. Those totals of individuals for station groups or single stations which were significantly higher than mean expected values (chi-squared = 10.83, $p < 0.001$) were used to define the extent of species assemblages.

Results

Species composition

The 20 successful hauls made in the NEW Polynya yielded 38322 specimens of peracarid crustaceans in at least 229 species from 121 genera and 51 families. Among these species, some amphipods could be distinguished at the species level but could not be named because of small size, immaturity or damage, and are assigned to genus only in Table 2. Other amphipod specimens could not be identified, even at the generic level. These are listed under Lysianassidae sp. indet., Oedicerotidae sp. indet. and Amphipoda sp. indet. in Table 2, but excluded from further analysis. Thus it is likely that the total number of species collected was higher than the total number recognized. When standardized to 1000 m hauls, 110323 individuals are represented, of which 105346 belong to the 229 species recognized (Table 2).

Abundance, diversity, and zonation

In terms of individuals, cumaceans were most abundant (31.2%) followed by amphipods (28.5%, including those not fully identified), isopods (25.2%), mysids (12.2%) and tanaids (3.0%) (Fig. 2, Table 2). In contrast, species diversity was highest among amphipods (130 spp., 57.0%), with lower values among the isopods (52 spp., 22.4%), cumaceans (31 spp., 13.6%) and mysids and tanaids (8 spp. each, 3.5%) (Table 2). The most abundant family sampled was the Diastylidae (Cumacea), and one of the species in that family, *Leptostylis villosa*, was the dominant peracarid captured in the Polynya (7.1% of all individuals collected). 45 species

Table 3. List of numerically most important peracarid species (i.e. those occurring at any one station with 5% dominance). BI = biological index after McCloskey (1970).

Species	Presence (%)	Mean density *	Max. density *	BI	Sum
<i>Leptostylis villosa</i>	70	393.5	1625	38	7870
<i>Eurycope brevis</i>	85	342.6	1455	42	6853
<i>Erythroptus erythroptus</i>	85	340.9	1424	35	6818
<i>Leucon pallidus</i>	90	325.7	1242	36	6514
<i>Eurycope inermis</i>	90	212.1	787	36	4241
<i>Leucon nathorstii</i>	80	208.4	1057	28	4168
<i>Bathymedon</i> sp.	35	177.4	2329	13	3549
<i>Leucon nasica</i>	75	170.2	1570	18	3405
<i>Brachydiastylis nimia</i>	90	159.3	818	22	3187
<i>Pseudomma frigidum</i>	85	142.7	892	32	2853
<i>Monoculodes</i> sp.	50	136.9	1177	12	2739
<i>Diastylis oxyrhyncha</i>	80	121.5	501	12	2429
<i>Erythroptus glacialis</i>	55	116.5	933	22	2329
<i>Ilyarachna bergendali</i>	80	98.8	399	14	1977
<i>Eudorella hispida</i>	80	92.3	284	12	1846
<i>Calathura brachiata</i>	90	91.4	263	12	1828
<i>Westwoodilla megalops</i>	5	89.0	1779	5	1779
<i>Leptognathia longiremis</i>	75	87.0	1498	4	1740
<i>Anonyx nugax</i>	70	79.3	927	4	1586
<i>Munna hanseni</i>	85	67.6	337	6	1352
<i>Syrrhoe crenulata</i>	60	55.0	599	6	1101
<i>Halirages fulvocincta</i>	45	49.4	596	5	987
<i>Arrhis phyllonyx</i>	85	48.6	246	3	972
<i>Diastylis scorpioides</i>	20	48.1	510	6	962
<i>Eurycope producta</i>	85	44.6	197	4	893
<i>Ambylops abbreviata</i>	70	41.9	273	7	837
<i>Leucon nasicooides</i>	10	41.8	452	6	836
<i>Rhachotropis helleri</i>	45	41.0	395	5	819
<i>Andaniexis abyssii</i>	60	37.6	211	3	752
<i>Metopa</i> sp.	80	37.5	437	3	750
<i>Munna groenlandica</i>	20	36.3	555	4	726
<i>Leucon fulvus</i>	5	29.9	599	4	599
<i>Petalosarsia declivis</i>	35	25.2	254	2	505
<i>Rhachotropis macropus</i>	25	24.2	225	4	484
<i>Halice abyssii</i>	55	22.1	210	6	441
<i>Parerythroptus spectabilis</i>	65	20.0	108	8	400
<i>Katianira bilobata</i>	20	16.9	315	4	339
<i>Gnathia stygia</i>	25	14.8	92	6	297
<i>Aceroides latipes</i>	65	12.8	142	3	255
<i>Nannoniscus reticula</i>	20	10.9	192	2	219
<i>Praniza</i> sp.	25	10.0	90	4	200
<i>Campylaspis stephenseni</i>	65	9.3	39	4	186
<i>Pardaliscella malygini</i>	15	1.8	25	2	36
<i>Hemilamprops uniplicata</i>	5	0.9	19	3	19
<i>Diastylis polaris</i>	5	0.8	17	2	17

* Mean density (ind. 1000 m²)

* Maximum density (ind. 1000 m²)

Abundance of taxa

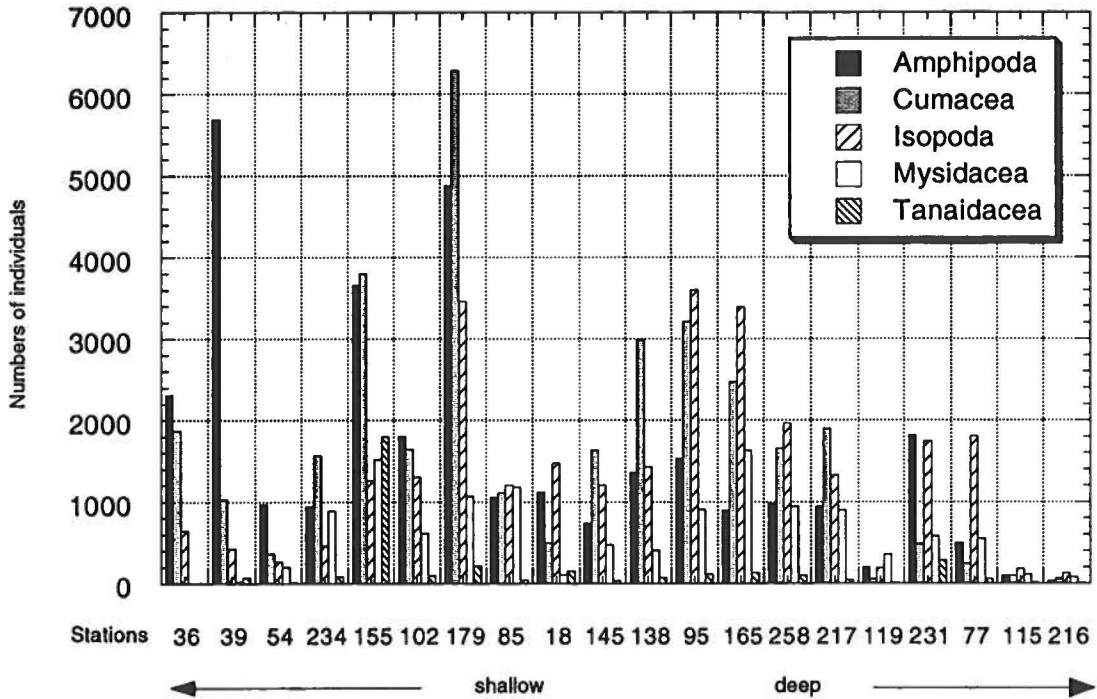


Figure 2. Abundance of peracarid taxa in the NEW Polynya. Stations are ordered by depth (compare table 1).

Diversity of taxa

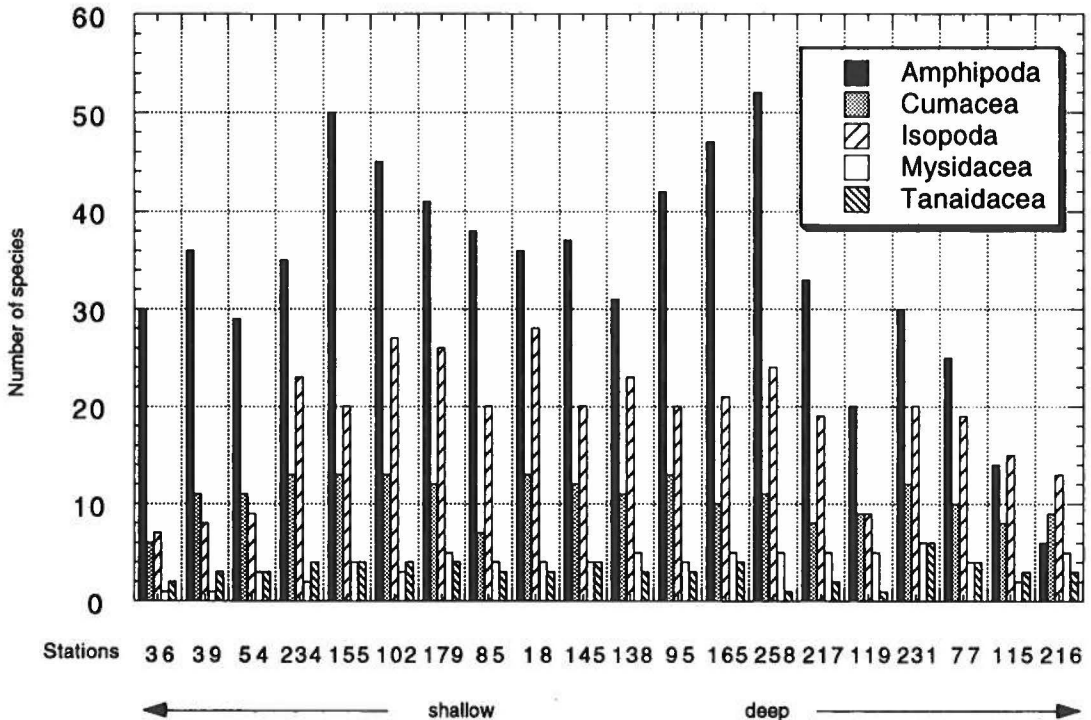
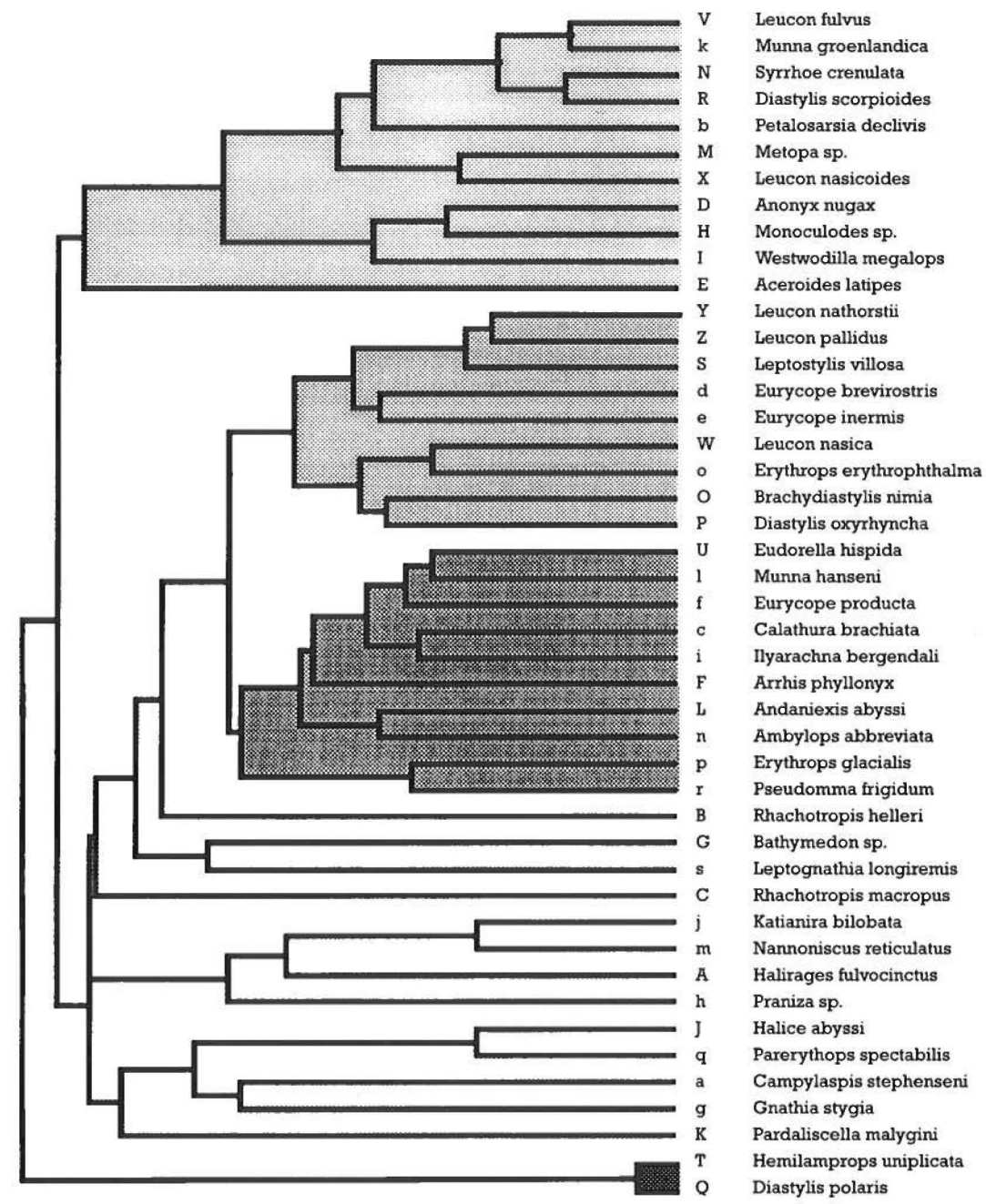


Figure 3. Diversity of peracarid taxa in the NEW Polynya. Stations are ordered by depth (compare table 1).

Tax. Species/Stations	36	39	217*	258*	138*	165*	95*	155	179	234	85	145	102	77	231	18	115	119	216	54	assemblage name	
depth (m)	45	50	328	326	314	320	315	186	260	180	270	310	232	425	411	310	492	377	517	174		
C <i>Leucon fulvus</i>	599																					
I <i>Munna groenlandica</i>	555	164							2		5											
A <i>Syrhoe crenulata</i>	599	255		7			8	84	25	52	5	3	3			22					38	
C <i>Diastylis scorpioides</i>	510	284					3	165														
C <i>Petalosarsia declivis</i>	254	72						117	16	18	10										18	
A <i>Metopa sp.</i>	92	437	3	16	3	10	17	16	46	3	75		6	3	13	8	2					
C <i>Leucon nasicooides</i>	348	452																				
A <i>Anonyx nugax</i>	62	927	52	6		5	3	139	269	39	7	12	20		39				6			
A <i>Monoculodes sp.</i>	608	1177		81				204	596	5		6				19	2				41	
A <i>Westwoodilla megalops</i>		1779																				
A <i>Aceroides laticeps</i>		29	3	3		5	3	39	2	5		3			16		2	3			142	
C <i>Leucon nathorstii</i>			225	250	579	537	680	16	1057	363		286	117		20	5	2	3	17		11	
C <i>Leucon pallidus</i>			671	650	731	1212	907	16	1242	210	114	118	356	64	89	96	2	12	2		22	
C <i>Leptostylis villosa</i>		2	256	231	1104	1322	943	1327	1625	245	259	440			56	17					43	
I <i>Eurycope brevisrostris</i>	6		228	390	128	1069	1455	10	188	5	615	637	487	1193	324	88	20			10		
I <i>Eurycope inermis</i>			356	787	34	554	624	143	426	5	189	65	65	282	538	63	14	53	32		11	
C <i>Leucon nasica</i>			93	7	84	52	115	1570	651	129	107	215	154	22	13				6		187	
M <i>Erythropros erythrophthalma</i>		21	156	88	290	155	585	1424	1049	873	1130	437	382		3	27			9	2	187	
C <i>Brachydiastylis nimia</i>			90	68	34	214	67	382	818	304	220	142	686	11	108	3	26	6	2		6	
C <i>Diastylis oxyrhyncha</i>			187	172	193	167	92	136	480	54	501	322		17	82	8	6	3			9	
C <i>Eudorella hispida</i>			135	195	128	108	258	19	218	111	5	62	54	35	220	284	12			2		
I <i>Munna hanseni</i>			128	20	180	337	143	39	109	10	36	68	9	5	32	227	4			2	5	
I <i>Eurycope producta</i>			24	107	39	57	62	52	148	31	36	106	9	8	3	197	6	6		2		
I <i>Calathura brachiata</i>			263	107	198	216	140	237	225	8	48	9	63	36	46	19	10	44	10		149	
I <i>Ilyarachna bergendali</i>			24	46	201	397	152	88	399	10	29	15	117	61	361	44	6			27		
A <i>Arrhis phyllonyx</i>			41	7	55	66	28	149	246	232	44	24	20	8		5	4	9	5		29	
A <i>Andaniexis abyssii</i>			211	85	115	106	39		58		34	21	9			8	41				25	
M <i>Amblylops abbreviata</i>			273	49	13	222	92	16	2		2	6		44	82	3			18	25		
M <i>Erythropros glacialis</i>			435	270	55	933			2		12			227	197	36			160	2		
M <i>Pseudomma frigidum</i>			892	540	21	305	104	52	7	10	34	32	231	172	190		76	148	37		2	
A <i>Rhachotropis helleri</i>				3		5		36	216		395	142	6	14							2	
A <i>Bathymedon sp.</i>			7	7			56	705	2329				3								442	
T <i>Leptognathia longiremis</i>		41			3	2	28	1498	25	33		3	6	14	7	68	2			5	5	
A <i>Rhachotropis macropus</i>					3		39			209			225			8						
I <i>Katianira bilobata</i>													3		16	315					5	
I <i>Nannoniscus reticulatus</i>									2				23			192		2				
A <i>Halirages fulvocinctus</i>			17	29	91	79	70	6	79						20	596						
I <i>Praniza sp.</i>			45					16								90			44	5		
A <i>Halice abyssii</i>				7	44	7	14					3	3		102	210	41		4	6		
M <i>Parerythropros spectabilis</i>			17	3	28	10		29	7			3	3		108	101	38		35	18		
C <i>Campylaspis stephenseni</i>	6				8	7	25	3	28	18			9		7	14			39	6	16	
I <i>Gnathia stygia</i>			72				46			23					64				92			
A <i>Pardaliscella malygini</i>	6				5														25			
C <i>Diastylis polaris</i>																					17	
C <i>Hemilamprops uniplicata</i>																					19	

Table 4. Table of the peracarid assemblages. Seven assemblages can be distinguished: a "shallow assemblage", a "common species assemblage", a "Westwind Trough assemblage", a "high accumulation area assemblage", an "ice associate assemblage", a "Norske Trough assemblage", and a "deep assemblage". Tax = Taxon, A = Amphipoda, C = Cumacea, I = Isopoda, M = Mysidacea, T = Tanaidacea.



100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0

Resemblance Index: Bray-Curtis-Index

UPGMA-Linkage

Ci = 0.8597

Figure 4. Dendrogram from the cluster analysis of the species communities in the NEW Polynya (fourth root – transformation of species abundance values, Bray Curtis Index, UPGMA – linkage; cophenetic index = 0.8597). Abbreviations V-Q are codes for the species, which are used in Figure 5 in the MDS plot. Shaded groupings correspond to assemblages defined in Table 4.

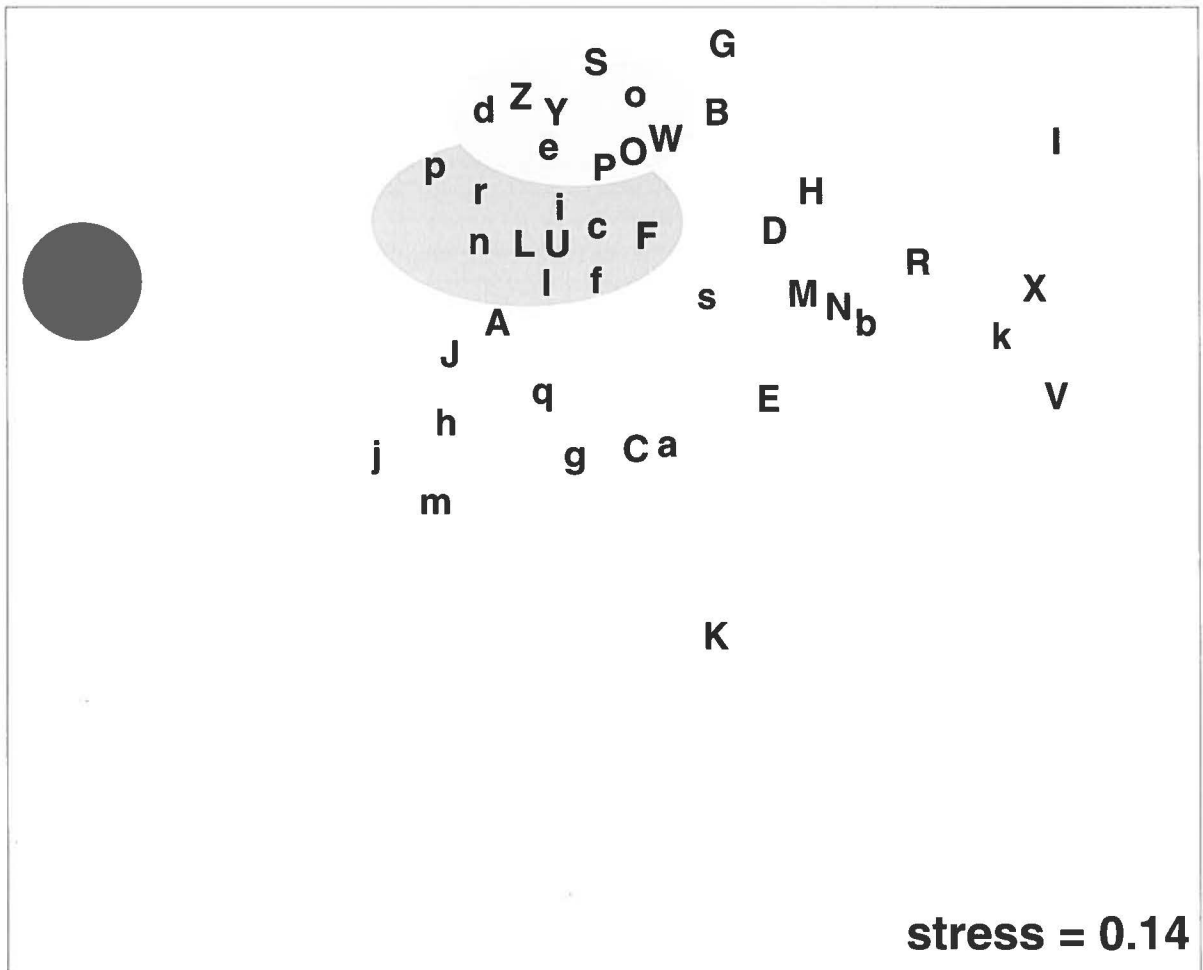


Figure 5. Plot of the multidimensional scaling (two dimensions) of the species communities (raw species abundance values, Bray Curtis Index, stress of MDS solution 0.14). For explanation of the codes (letters), see species names in Fig. 4. Shaded groupings correspond to assemblages defined in Table 4.

achieved a 5% dominance at one or more stations (Table 3), while 22 species exceeded 10% dominance, but only 5 (*Bathymedon* sp., station 54; *Erythropus erythropthalma*, station 85; *Erythropus glacialis*, station 119; *Eurycope brevirostris*, station 77; and *Westwoodilla megalops*, station 39) exceeded 20%. None of the 228 species occurred at all 20 stations, but 5 species, *Brachydiastylis nimia*, *Leucon pallidus*, *Calathura brachiata*, *Eurycope inermis* and *Pseudotanaeus macrocheles*, were found at 18 stations. In four of these cases, species were absent from both of the two shallow stations.

Abundance and diversity were lowest at the deepest station (216; 517 m) and at stations 115 and 119 (377-492 m) (Figs 2 and 3; Tables 1 and 2), suggesting that depth may be a controlling factor. However, there is no general correlation of abundance or diversity with depth (Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, $\rho > 0.05$) and therefore factors other than depth must be involved. Sta-

tion 179 showed the highest abundance of Peracarida (Table 1), followed by station 155. Diversity ranged from 35 to 90 species and was highest at stations 102, 155, and 258 (Table 1 [S]). The abundance of cumaceans and isopods was higher than that of amphipods at many stations in the NEW (Table 2), although at the shallow stations 36 and 39 Amphipoda were predominant (Fig. 2). However, amphipods were most diverse at 18 stations and were outranked only at the deep stations 115 and 216 by the Isopoda. Although there are overall no significant relationships between depth and diversity, amphipod numbers are significantly higher (Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, $\rho < 0.05$) at shallower depths. Both abundance and diversity were highest at stations sampled around 300 m depth, especially in the Westwind Trough, in the north of the Polynya (Table 1).

Peracarid communities

7 assemblages of peracarid crustaceans could be distinguished (Table 4), of which four were well defined (Figs 4 and 5): The "shallow assemblage" had its main occurrence at station 36 and 39. It consisted mainly of amphipods (6 species), of 3 cumacean species, and 1 isopod species (Table 4, Figs 4 and 5). Species of the "common species assemblage" occurred at all stations, but were most frequent in the Norske and Westwind Troughs. This species assemblage was dominated by 6 cumacean (Table 4; Figs 4 and 5), but also consisted of 2 isopod, and 1 mysid species. The "Westwind Trough assemblage" (Table 4; Figs 4 and 5) had its distributional focus in the Westwind Trough, especially at the "time series station", as well as on stations 179 and 155, which showed very high abundance values for the Peracarida (Table 1). Most species of this assemblage were isopods (4 species), followed by mysids (3 species), amphipods (2 species), and 1 cumacean species. The "high accumulation area assemblage" (Table 4) and the next two assemblages mentioned are not as well defined as the above characterized assemblages. Therefore, they are not highlighted in Figs 4 and 5. The "high accumulation area" assemblage is focussed mainly on the shallower Westwind Trough stations, where the highest concentrations of organic detritus were found. It consists of 4 species, of which 3 belong to the Amphipoda and only 1 to the Tanaidacea (Table 4). However, *Rhachotropis macropus*, although attributed to this assemblage in the cluster analysis, does not occur on stations 155 and 179. The "ice associated assemblage" comprised mainly isopod species (3 of 4), which were frequent at station 18, close to the ice edge in the Norske Trough (Table 4). Only 1 amphipod species, *Halirages fulvocinctus*, occurred in high numbers at this station. The "Norske Trough assemblage" included species which were concentrated in the Norske Trough, but some were also important in the Belgica Trough (Table 4). This assemblage did not show a distinct importance of a certain peracarid taxon, but combined 5 species of 4 peracarid taxa; two of these were Amphipoda, whereas Cumacea, Isopoda, and Mysidacea were represented by a single species. The "deep assemblage" was well defined (Table 1 and Figs 4 and 5), consisting of 2 cumacean species, *Diastylis polaris* and *Hemilamprops uniplicata*, which occurred only on the deepest station 216.

Discussion

Sampling gear

In contrast to megafaunal organisms, macrobenthic peracarid crustaceans are too small for *in situ* analysis by camera or video systems (e.g. Gutt 1991; Hargrave

1985; Hecker 1990; Piepenburg 1988; Piepenburg & v. Juterzenka 1994; Smith 1985), and are rarely sufficiently abundant to be sampled adequately even by grabs or larger box corers covering 0.25 m². Such samples cannot provide unbiased abundance estimates for species which may occur in rather low densities (some species of amphipods and isopods), form swarms (Mysidacea), or have a patchy distribution due to food availability (all Peracarida) (Holme & McIntyre 1984). Bow-wave effects of corers (Jumars, 1975) influence sampling efficiency to an unknown degree. Towed gears are semi-quantitative only and catches may be biased by avoidance reactions of mobile organisms (mysids or some amphipods). However, our samples were taken with an epibenthic sledge (Rothlisberg & Percy, 1977) which is usually towed at one knot, and catches mysids and amphipods in considerable numbers (Buhl-Jensen 1986) (Table 2).

Species composition, zoogeography, diversity

Information on the occurrence of peracarid crustacean assemblages in the northern North Atlantic is scarce and not easily accessible, as synopses generally are non-existent, and descriptions and keys of families, genera, or species are widely distributed in taxonomic literature. Few publications present the distribution of taxa for specific areas (e.g. Brandt 1993; Buhl-Jensen 1986; Clark & Threlfall, 1993; Gurjanova 1946; Hansen 1916; Kussakin, 1962, 1973, 1983; Svavarsson et al. 1990, 1993 b) or on the diversity (Gray, 1994). Publications on biogeographic distribution of animals or on the composition, abundance, and biomass of faunal groups are the basis for further ecological research (Carey 1991). Such research might be used to deduce environmental effects over larger areas when the investigations of the biodiversity of taxa are repeated in the framework of a monitoring programme (Duineveld et al. 1991). As knowledge of faunal composition facilitates future works on the taxa in question, in terms of comparisons and identifications of species, such work will be of great value to biologists who investigate the Peracarida of the North Atlantic.

The high biodiversity of the Peracarida in the NEW Polynya documented here in the finding of 229 species from 121 genera and 51 families indicates that the environmental conditions such as time of opening and closing of the polynya must have been relatively stable over a long period of time (e.g. Zenkewitch 1954). With respect to current discussions on global change processes, intense melting of ice and subsequent changes of salinity and productivity might strongly disturb the whole benthic community in this area, and hence, affect the biological balance of this ecosystem.

Very few publications on faunal composition of peracarid taxa in the North Atlantic are based on epibenthic sledge hauls and are therefore comparable with our polynya data. However, a monograph on the origin of Arctic Cumacea is in preparation (Vassilenko & Brandt, in prep.), which will consider all known species of the Arctic Ocean and adjacent waters. Buhl-Jensen (1986) registered 159 amphipod species from the Norwegian continental shelf (EBS samples). In the NEW Polynya, which is much further north and is affected by cold Arctic polar water of the East Greenland Current, 130 species have been sampled. Svavarsson et al. (1993 b) and Svavarsson et al. (1990) listed 106 Arctic and Arctic-boreal species of asellote isopods (an important component of the deep sea and polar faunas) in the Norwegian, Greenland, Iceland, and North Polar Seas (all from EBS samples). Only 69 of these species had been reported from the depth range of our study (1-517 m). 42 of these 69 species have been recorded in our study in the NEW Polynya, i.e. two thirds of all known Arctic-boreal and Arctic asellote isopods, suggesting that the diversity of that area is high and also that the epibenthic sledge has a high catch potential, meaning many different habitats were sampled in the polynya and also at each single station leading to a high number of individuals and species per locality. The number of asellotes found in the polynya is high in that our findings refer to only 22 stations, while those of Svavarsson et al. (1993 b) cover their recent investigation and literature data accumulated over the past one hundred years. Poore et al. (1994), however, reported 359 species of Isopoda from 46 EBS samples taken off southeastern Australia. Of these, 249 are asellote isopods. This may seem to be an extraordinarily high diversity, but it may well be "normal" for the Indo-Pacific when compared to the depauperate faunas of the East Pacific or Atlantic. Therefore discussions on diversity values of the Atlantic fauna with those of other oceans can only be done on the background of the age of the oceans.

Gray (1994) summarizes data from a 5 yr monitoring project. The samples taken with a Van Veen grab yielded 620 species (39582 individuals), however, no comments on the respective taxa are given. Without knowledge of the taxa in question and also with regard to the different sampling technique, our data are not comparable with those of Gray (1994). Gray points out that a standardization of sampling (e.g. areas sampled, gears used, sieve sizes) is crucial for an accurate comparison of the diversity of geographical areas and depths. Therefore we could only compare our data with those, which used the same gear in the North Atlantic (Buhl-Jensen, 1986; Svavarsson, 1982, 1984a, 1984b, 1987a, 1987b, 1988a, 1988b, Svavarsson et al., 1990, 1993a, 1993b).

The diversity of Peracarida in the polynya is much higher than expected, if we consider recent discussions on decrease of diversity with latitude (e.g. Brey et al. 1994; Gage & May 1993; May 1992; Poore & Wilson

1993; Rex et al. 1993). However, arguments are based on deep-sea surveys, whereas stations in the NEW Polynya were situated on the continental shelf and upper slope down to about 500 m. Nevertheless, no obvious correlation of abundance or diversity with depth could be found (Figs 2 and 3). At our stations, diversity was highest around 300 m depth (Fig. 3). Isopoda are more diverse than Amphipoda at the deep stations 115 and 216, which might indicate an increasing importance of Isopoda within the peracarid community with depth. Brey et al. (1994) cautioned against general statements, such as a decrease of deep-sea diversity with latitude. Our findings in the NEW Polynya also suggest that a variety of biotic and abiotic parameters must be considered to explain species communities, rather than overemphasis of latitude-based parameters to the exclusion of others. Moreover, studies of biodiversity in high latitudes are few, and recent investigations in the Antarctic (Brey et al. 1994) suggest that diversity there may be higher than assumed by Poore & Wilson (1993).

General discussions on diversity (e.g. Sanders et al. 1965) and uniformity of the deep-sea fauna (Zenkevitch 1954) also have to be considered, as lateral advection and plankton- and ice-algae blooms are unlikely to be the only effects influencing peracarid community composition. The polynya is open for 4-5 months per year and so experiences strong seasonality. However, biological disturbance (Dayton & Hessler 1972; Smith & Hamilton 1988), competition (Grassle & Sanders 1973), competition and predation correlated with production (Rex 1976), of habitat heterogeneity (Jumars 1976), and small scale disturbance within stable communities (Grassle & Morse-Porteous 1987) may influence the communities characterized for the different stations. These biological and physical relationships and effects may be more important during the winter months, when little or no organic matter reaches the seafloor or has remained from summerly deposition. Unfortunately, the feeding behaviour of most peracarid species (Table 3) is poorly known. Some data are available for Amphipoda (Coleman 1989, 1991), and on the feeding of asellote isopods on foraminiferans (Svavarsson et al., 1993b; Wilson & Thistle 1985). Ahrens (1994) discusses a possible control of foraminiferan abundance by predatory benthic isopods, such as Ilyarachnids, in the NEW Polynya. Many other peracarids which burrow in the first centimeter of sediment (e.g. Ischnomesidae, Eurycopidae, Ilyarachnidae, Desmosomatidae) (Hessler & Strömberg 1989) are mainly deposit feeders and are supposed to have an important influence on niche diversification, bioturbation, and benthic carbon cycling.

As peracarid crustaceans are generally known to increase in importance with depth (Grassle & Maciolek 1992), it is likely that a transect over the East Greenland shelf and upper slope would reveal highly diverse peracarid communities, at even deeper stations. However,

Gray (1994) cautions against a generalization of the hypothesis of an increase of diversity with depth: "the high diversity shown on the Norwegian continental shelf is in marked contrast to the extremely low diversity shown in the deep-sea area of the Norwegian Sea....more data are urgently needed to test the postulate that continental shelf diversity can be as high as that of the deep sea" (Gray, 1994: 208).

Species assemblages

A multivariate statistical analysis of the peracarid species community revealed various species assemblages being specific for certain station groups (Table 4; Figs 4 and 5; compare also Brandt 1995). An analysis of the stations was presented by Brandt (1995). The "shallow assemblage" contains species which have their highest abundances at the two shallowest stations (36 and 39). Half of the constituent species in this assemblage are amphipods which show a wide spectrum of lifestyles. *Syrrhoë crenulata* may be a shallow infaunal deposit or detritus feeder (Bousfield 1982). *Metopa* sp. is likely to live in association with some larger organism. Species of *Metopa* are known to associate with medusae, actinarians and bivalves, and appear to feed on host secretions (Vader 1972, 1983; Vader & Beehler 1983). In contrast, *Anonyx nugax* is a necrophage and predator (Sainte-Marie & Lamarche 1985) while *Monoculodes* sp. and *Westwoodilla megalops* may be detritivores or micro-predators (Bousfield 1982). A major difference exists between the "shallow assemblage", characterized mainly by amphipod and cumacean species and the "deep assemblage" marked by the 2 cumacean species (*Diastylis polaris* and *Hemilamprops uniplicata*), found only at the deepest station 216, which lies in the outflow of the cold polar water from the Arctic Ocean. Little is known about differences in lifestyle or substrate preferences of cumaceans, however, it is clear that Amphipoda tend to dominate shallower habitats in the NEW Polynya, whereas Cumacea and Isopoda increase in importance with depth (Fig. 2, Tables 1 and 2).

The "common species assemblage" contains species which occur at almost all stations, but are most frequent in the Norske and Westwind Trough (Table 4). They are present in lower numbers in the Belgica Trough in the south and station 216 in the northeast, where lower amounts of organic matter were available (Brandt 1995; Ritzrau pers. comm. 1994). At station 54, close to the Henrik Krøyer Islands, these animals are also less abundant probably as a result of the influence of the northern Ingolfssjørd (Wesenberg-Lund 1950). Six of these species are cumaceans that burrow and are mainly detritivores. The 2 isopod species of this assemblage, *Eurycope brevis*, and *E. inermis*, are known to feed on detritus and foraminifers (Brandt et al. 1994, Svavarsson

et al., 1993a). The suprabenthic mysid *Erythrope erythrothalma* feeds on organic material in the BNL.

Except for the cumaceans, all of the species found for the "Westwind Trough assemblage" (time series stations and stations 155, 179; Figs 4 and 5; Table 4) have a primarily epibenthic lifestyle. *Eurycope producta*, *Ilyarachna bergendali* and *Munna hanseni* feed on detritus (Hessler & Strömberg 1989), although the first two species and other members of the Eurycopidae and Ilyarachnidae have been found to feed primarily on Foraminifera (Svavarsson et al. 1993a). *Calathura brachyata* is a carnivorous predator that can also burrow. The amphipods of this assemblage are also epibenthic detritivores or carnivores. *Andaniëxis abyssis* is often associated with cnidarians (Coleman pers. comm.). The northern Westwind Trough is also characterized by the highest concentrations of chlorophyll equivalents in the upper sediment layers (Graf, Scheltz pers. comm.) and POC (particulate organic carbon) concentration in the BNL (bottom nepheloid layer) (Ritzrau pers. comm., 1994), especially at station 179., this region is obviously a "high accumulation area" (Brandt 1995).

The "high accumulation area assemblage", "Norske Trough assemblage", and "ice associate assemblage" are less clearly defined (therefore they are not marked in Figs 4 and 5). The "high accumulation area assemblage" consists of two species; the amphipod *Bathymedon* sp., a probable detritivore and the tanaid *Leptognathia longiremis*.

In terms of species, Isopoda dominate also the "ice associate assemblage" (station 18). Two of the isopod species, *Katianira bilobata*, and *Nannoniscus reticulatus* are probably detritivores (Hansen 1916; Svavarsson 1987 a), whereas *Praniza* sp. is a fish parasite. *Halirages fulvocinctus*, the only amphipod species in this assemblage belongs to the family Calliopidae, whose species live epibenthically and are either omnivores or carnivores (Bousfield 1982).

The "Norske Trough assemblage" is a mixture of species in 4 different peracarid taxa. It is probable that the amphipod *Halice abyssis* is a free-swimming predator, whereas the cumacean *Campylaspis stephenseni* and the mysid *Parerythrope spectabilis* are filter-feeding detritivores. *Gnathia stygia* (Isopoda) probably lives in association with sponges, as does *Gnathia abyssorum* (Klitgaard 1991), although no poriferans were collected at these stations.

The cluster analysis of the stations revealed that in general stations which lie close together showed the highest resemblance. For example, the stations of the "time-series-station" (95, 138, 165, 217, and 258) showed the best correlation (Brandt 1995, compare Table 1). Stations 179 and 155 in the Westwind Trough were very similar with regard to species composition and abundance and define the "high accumulation assemblage". Biological activity (ATP content) and food availability (chlorophyll-equivalents and POC content)

(Graf, Scheltz, Ritzrau pers. comm.) were highest at station 179 and somewhat lower at station 155, possibly as a result of current direction and accumulation of organic matter due to lateral advection. Stations 115, 119, and 216 were the deepest stations and also show the lowest abundance values. Station 216 characterised this assemblage, which is probably correlated with the low productivity of the water masses and availability of nutrients, resulting from ice cover and hydrography (e.g. circulation pattern).

Although the assemblages identified show varying degrees of overlap, we are confident that they reflect zonation patterns in the polynya. An independent analysis of 125 of the more abundant species listed in Table 2 (the results of which are not reported here) generated a pattern very close to that derived from 45 species.

Abiotic and biotic parameters

Water masses flowing from the Arctic Ocean south through the Fram Strait are nutrient-poor, and primary production is inhibited by the almost permanent ice cover. The East Greenland Current flows south along the eastern sides of the Ob and Belgica Banks where ice cover is still extensive at least until June. Driven by the topography of the Belgica Trough these water masses form an anticyclonal gyre around the Belgica Bank. Stations 115 and 119 in the mouth of the Belgica Trough are situated under an area where ice cover is almost permanent, and where ice movement is limited. Further to the north, the Polynya becomes more extensive and is open for a greater proportion of the year, and the residual ice cover is more mobile (König pers. comm.). Variations in surface and bottom water temperatures (Ritzrau pers. comm.; Ahrens 1994:108) and salinity (Machoczek 1989) are slight, although Lara et al. (1994) recorded significant insolation effects in the Polynya. In areas of close ice, water column and sea ice production are inhibited, but both are enhanced in areas of lower ice cover and greater movement. The relative importance of water column and sea ice productivity may vary markedly from year to year, depending on hydrography, ice cover, nutrient availability and insolation.

In the NEW Polynya productivity increases from south to north (Lara et al. 1994) and production is carried northward by the coastal current. Thus the potential input of particulate organic carbon (POC) to near-bottom layers of the water column is much higher in the northern part of the Polynya.

Peracarid crustaceans and other epi- and suprabenthic animals depend, directly or indirectly, on organic material which is accumulated in the bottom nepheloid layer (BNL). The content of POC in the BNL as well as chlorophyll incorporation into the sediment must have a strong impact on the peracarid communities. Therefore

it is not surprising that we find a positive correlation between peracarid abundance and assemblages dominated by detritivores on one hand and chlorophyll equivalents in the first 10 centimetres of the sediment on the other (Spearman's $\rho = 0.725$, $n = 14$). The values are much higher in the Westwind Trough than in the Belgica Trough. POC content and the resulting bacterial biomass in the BNL also coincided with our abundance data of the peracarids in the north and the Westwind Trough and the Belgica Trough. This also suggests a coupling between POC content in the BNL and peracarid abundance. These differences found for the peracarids between the Westwind Trough and the Belgica Trough resemble that reported for the polychaetes (Ambrose & Renaud, 1995) and also meiobenthic community patterns. The southern Belgica Trough is characterized by a distinct nematode community (Herman & Jensen pers. comm.; Piepenburg et al., *subm.*).

The fauna identified at stations 36 and 39 is distinct from that found at deeper stations. This clear separation is partly the result of the 120-130 m difference in soundings, but is much influenced by other factors, such as the influence of the northern Ingolfssjørd. Currents are stronger on the banks than in the troughs, and result in lower sedimentation of fine particles, a coarser substrate, and a very different suite of megafaunal organisms (Fig. 6).

Differences are most pronounced in the northern and southern area of the NEW Polynya, especially with regard to abundance of peracarid taxa, as well as between banks and troughs in general (Fig. 6). Generally, the banks are characterized by coarse sediments with many smaller stones or rocks which are inhabited by sessile suspension feeders, sponges, and alcyonarians (Fig. 6 a and b). In general, larger megabenthic animals, such as ophiuroids, asteroids, pycnogonids, bivalves, etc. dominate at these stations (Fig. 6 a and b). However, the slopes of the banks and the bottoms of the troughs are characterized by soft sediments, with fewer megabenthic animals. At these stations the importance of smaller macrobenthic taxa, especially peracarid crustaceans and polychaetes increased (Fig. 6 c and d). These differences might be attributed to different current regimes (study area and Künitzer et al. 1991), different sedimentation patterns (Basford et al. 1990; Grebmeier et al. 1988, 1989; Jensen et al. 1992), sediment erosion, or other abiotic parameters, such as temperature and salinity (Dyer et al. 1983). Chl a and ATP contents of the upper sediment layer (Ahrens 1994: 53, 108; Graf, Scheltz pers. comm., unpublished data) correlate with peracarid abundance. At station 179 we found the highest chlorophyll and ATP values in the sediment and also the highest abundances of Peracarida. This suggests that this station lies in a high accumulation area and might indicate the involvement of epibenthic peracarids on bioturbation processes in this area (Brandt 1993; Brandt & Piepenburg 1994; Grebmeier & Mc Roy 1989).

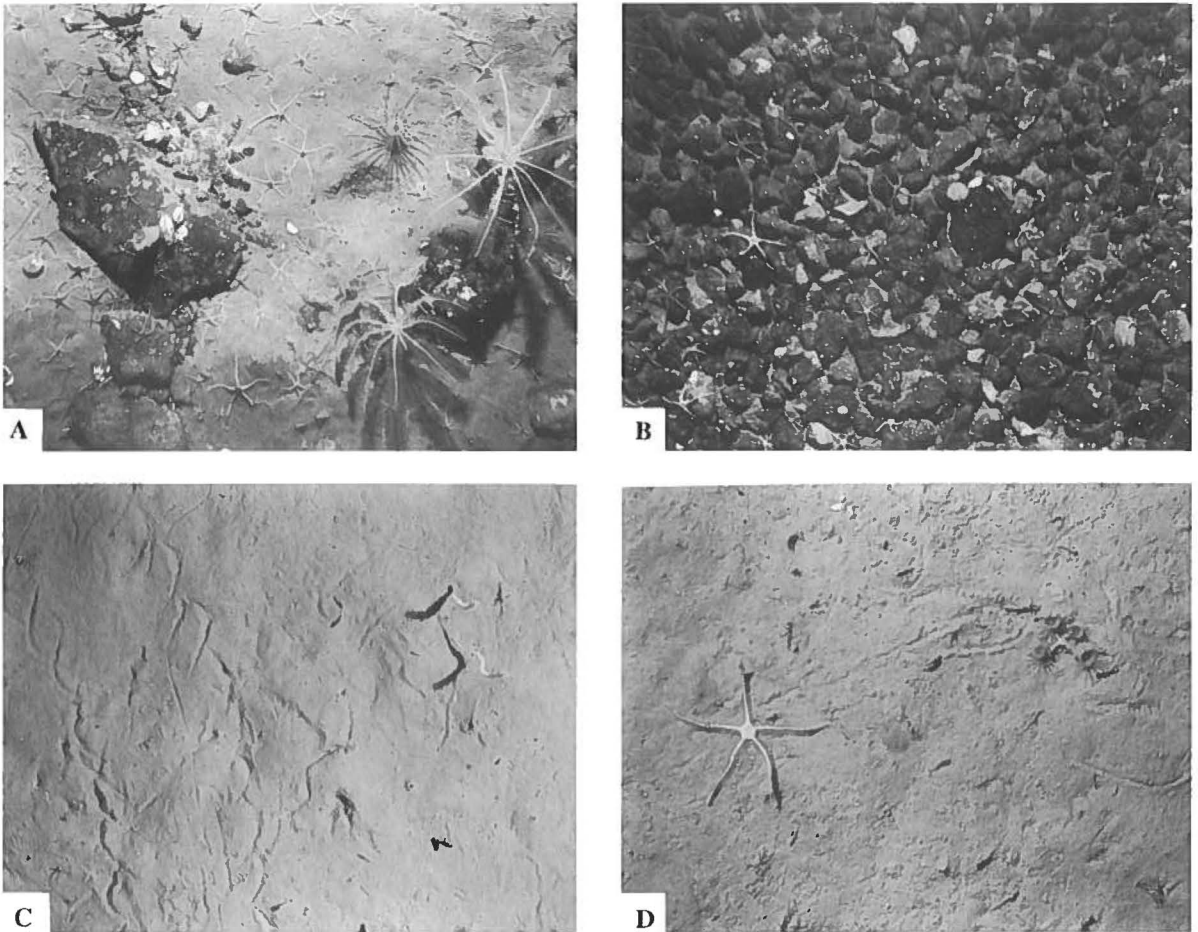


Figure 6. Seabed photographs (taken by Dr. D. Piepenburg) from the NEW Polynya taken in different years. A) Northern Belgica Bank, 80°00'N 14°00'W, 80 m depth (4.8.1995) with feather stars (*Heliometra glacialis*), brittle stars (*Ophiocten serriceum* and *Ophiura robusta*), a starfish (*Solaster sp.*) and a cerianthid sea anemone; B) Northern Belgica Bank, 80°00'N 11°00'W, 100 m depth (21.7.1985) with brittle stars (*Ophiura robusta* and *Ophiocten serriceum*); C) Norske Trough, 80°06'N 15°45'W, 380 m depth (12.6.1993) with "Lebensspuren", probably from brittle stars; D) Belgica Trough, 78°00'N 15°27'W, 500 m depth (31.7.1990) with the brittle star *Ophiacantha bidentata* and zoanthid anthozoans. A and B are typical examples for bank locations characterized by many stones and boulders, C and D are typical trough locations characterized by soft bottom sediments.

Besides a high biodiversity (229 species) another characteristic for the NEW Polynya is the high productivity of this area in the summer months. Many of the amphipod, cumacean and isopod specimens are represented by juveniles (manacs of stage 1-3) and ovigerous females, indicating that spawning during the productive summer time is very favourable (Brandt et al., 1994).

Conclusion

1. The NEW Polynya supports a highly diverse fauna of Crustacea Peracarida. At least 229 species were shown to occur there, of which 130 (57%) are Amphipoda, 52 (22%) are Isopoda, 31 (14%) are Cumacea, 8 (4%) are Mysidacea, and 8 (4%) Tanaidacea.
2. Based on an examination of over 38000 specimens, Cumacea (31%) were most abundant, followed by Amphipoda (28%), Isopoda (25%), Mysidacea (12%), and Tanaidacea (3%).
3. Overall abundance and diversity were not related to depth. High values of both were found at stations in the Westwind Trough at depths of 180-330 m.
4. Based on occurrences and abundances of 45 significant species, 7 species assemblages were established. These groupings, although not mutually exclusive, were defined by bathymetric, latitudinal and biological factors.
5. Peracarid abundance coincided with availability of organic matter (e.g. chlorophyll equivalents in the upper 10 cm of sediment, unpublished data from Graf).

6. Abundance and diversity of peracarid communities in the NEW Polynya are controlled by hydrography, ice cover and primary productivity, during the summer months, whereas in winter, when the polynya is closed, biological processes (such as competition and predation), are likely to control the composition of the peracarid fauna.

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