

Copepods Composition and Biomass in the Sea of Azov During 2003

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Abstract: The contemporary state of copepod community in the Sea of Azov was studied in June 2003. Acartiidae species were most abundant in the samples. They included basically *A. clausi* and *A. tonsa*. Presence of *Acartia tonsa* in the open sea is reported for the first time. It was numerous and comprised 70-80% of the whole *Acartia* population. Three *Eurytemora* species and two *Centropages* species were found in the Sea of Azov. *Centropages spinosus* is a new species in the Sea of Azov. Basic trends of development and spatial distribution of copepod biomass are delineated. The rise of acartiid and of *Calanipeda aquaedulcis* density in comparison with the 1970s was recorded. Possible reasons of diversity changes in the copepod populations are discussed.

Key words: Sea of Azov, copepods, biomass, composition, *Acartia tonsa*, *Centropages spinosus*