SPATIAL VARIATIONS OF BENTHIC MEIOFAUNA COMMUNITIES FROM PALOMPON BAY, NORTHERN LEYTE

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Abstract of Special Problem titled

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Meiofauna play a significant role in maintaining ecological balance in marine ecosystems especially in the dynamics of the seagrass meadows. The meiofauna links the upper trophic level with detritus-feeding organisms. Only few studies have been conducted in the Philippines, while no studies have been. This study was conducted in Palompon, northern Leyte in November 2011, to determine the spatial distribution of meiobenthic fauna in the area and to compare community structure in terms of species composition, species density, and species diversity among five stations included in the survey.

Twenty taxa were identified with nematodes being numerically dominant, followed by harpacticoid copepods. It also showed the highest mean abundance for the entire habitat type. The overall mean density was 194585.1528 ind. m^2, with the highest population at station 4. And the lowest population was recorded at station 2. Soft bottom habitat showed the highest recorded mean density among the 5 stations, Harpacticoids mostly dominated sandy substrate while nematodes were widely distributed.