CRUSTACEA, PERACARIDA, TANAIDACEA

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Tanaidaceans are small peracarid crustaceans, which occur in all marine habitats and over the full range of depths. They are truly benthic organisms which burrow in the upper layer of the sediments or inhabit constructing tubes. Tanaidaceans have no planktonic stage at any phase of their life-cycle and therefore are considered as a taxon with restricted dispersal potential. They represent various trophic gildia as detritophages, sesntonofages, phytophages, xylophages and predators. Currently over 1300 nominal species of tanaidaceans are known representing only a part of the potential diversity of this group that might include 40 000 species. Most recent study (last decade) done below continental shelf in the Southern Ocean, NE Pacific and West Australia have demonstrated that tanaids might be abundant and highly diverse element of abyssal benthic assemblages.

The suborder Apseudomorpha (with 508 species in 14 families) is considered the most plesiomorphic suborder of tanaidaceans and is represented in abyssal by two families only e.g., Apseudidae and Sphyrapodidae. The other suborder –Tanaidomorpha (793 species in total) includes deep-water Neotanaoidea (45), shallow-water Tanaidoidea (83) and tube-building Paratanaoidea (703). From the last superfamily about three-quarters is represented by blind species, which most probably radiated in the deep-sea.

From the polymetallic nodule habitats in the Central Pacific less than ten species in six genera have been formally described so far. All of them represent superfamily Paratanaoidea.