

Taxonomy and biogeography of macrofaunal isopods of the Pacific abyssal fauna relevant to the CCFZ

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In marine environments isopods are a relatively rich and ubiquitous element and have been described across all oceans and depths. Isopod crustaceans have been proved a popular and useful taxon to assess large-scale biodiversity and distribution patterns across marine benthic habitats. With the exception of few parasitic groups, isopods lack planktonic larval stages, but brood their offspring in a ventral brooding pouch. This should typically impose some restrictions on dispersal potential as they are limited to adult movement. Thus information on isopod distributions is putatively very valuable for analyses of biogeographic ranges. In the CCFZ isopods probably represent one of the better studied macrofaunal groups which are therefore used as a model to study variation in diversity and levels of population and community connectivity. This presentation gives an introduction to isopod taxonomy, including information on sampling devices and preservation of samples. Furthermore preliminary findings on the diversity and distribution of isopods from the CCZ based on data from recent expeditions to the central equatorial Pacific are presented.