

JUVENILE PLANKTONIC CEPHALOPODS SAMPLED OFF THE COASTS OF CENTRAL GREECE (EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN) DURING WINTER

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ABSTRACT: Cephalopod early life stages were identified from plankton samples taken with bongo-nets (500 µm mesh size) off the coasts of central Greece (N: 39° 18'–37° 25', E: 20° 15'–24° 33') in December 2000–February 2001. The sampling was not directed at cephalopods but provided valuable information on the distribution of cephalopod planktonic stages in Greek waters. Oblique tows were carried out over a grid of 100 stations from a depth of 200 m to the surface on a 24 hour basis. At each station vertical profiles of temperature and salinity were also taken using a SBE-25 CTD profiler. A total of 9 taxa belonging to five families were caught at 21 stations. Among these, the Ommastrephidae was the most numerically abundant (75.7%) family followed by the Octopodidae (15.7%), Loliginidae (4.3%), Sepiolidae (2.9%) and Enoploteuthidae (1.4%). Frequency of occurrence (number of positive tows/total number of tows) of cephalopods was highest during evening tows and in waters with surface temperature >18°C. Most positive tows yielded less than 3 specimens.
