

- 74 **THE FACTORS STRUCTURING THE MEIOBENTHOS COMMUNITIES IN THE SHELF BREAK AREA IN THE GULF OF BISCAY (N.E. ATLANTIC).** A. Vanreusel and M. Vincx - University of Ghent.

The meiobenthos of seven stations in the Gulf of Biscay ranging from 70 to 235 m depth are investigated in order to characterize the zone of transition from the continental shelves to the deep sea. The nematode communities, which are the dominant taxon, are relatively poor compared to those of shallow coastal areas. Small species are dominant and the total biomass is low. The species richness, however, is much higher than on the continental shelves, and even comparable to deep sea situations. The meiobenthos densities are correlated with densities of the microbial populations and with the oxygen supply. Chlorophyll a and sediment composition are also important structuring factors. The combined importance of food supply and oxygen is striking for the determination of the density of the meiofauna.

- 75 **BIOCHEMICAL CHARACTERIZATION OF FISHPATHOGENIC VIBRIO-SPECIES.** I. Van Roosbroeck, L. Grisez, R. Ceusters and F. Ollevier - Catholic University of Leuven (KUL)

A total of 262 strains of the Vibrionacea (of which about 14 were type-strains) were subjected to 152 biochemical and morphological tests. Most of these strains belong to the genus *Vibrio*, but also strains from related genera (*Aeromonas* and *Photobacterium*) and some *Pseudomonas*-strains have been included in this study. Besides 9 fishpathogenic *Vibrio*-species, some non-pathogenic strains were also investigated. For the testing, two teststrips (API 20E and API CH50, Biomérieux, Belgium) and 82 traditionally performed biochemical and morphological tests were used. The results of these tests were submitted to a cluster analysis (UPGMA from SAS). The dendrogram obtained from this cluster analysis shows the relation between the different fishpathogenic species and between pathogenic and the non-pathogenic vibrios. Special attention was given to the variance within the species *Vibrio anguillarum*. Based on the results, a determination key and a determination table for fishpathogenic *Vibrio*-species were made. The most important conclusion from this research is that there should be a partial review of the taxonomy within the genus *Vibrio*.

- 76 **GRIPPING MECHANISM IN DIDELPHIS INCLUDES PREHENSIVE PATTERNS.** K.J. van Zwieten, P.L. Lippens and M. Honinckx - Limburgs Universitair Centrum, Diepenbeek.

The hands of all primates, including man, possess convergent-divergent digits. The brush possum and the common opossum also have hands showing convergent positions (adduction of digits) and divergent positions (abduction of digits) (1). It is