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## BIOLOGICAL NOTES

Rapid communication

### ***CERCOPAGIS PENGROI (CLADOCERA)* CONQUERED THE SOUTHERN BALTIC SEA**

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In 1992 in the Gulf of Riga a predatory spiny water flea *Cercopagis pengroi* of Ponto-Caspian origin was found. It is a cladoceran which had never before appeared in the Baltic Sea (Ojaver & Lumberg 1995). Three years later; i.e. in 1995, this species reached the Gulf of Finland (Bychenkov & Rodionova 1996; Panov et al. 1996), appearing at that moment also in the neighbourhood of St. Petersburg (Avinskyi 1997; Krylov et al. 1999). Until then, however, no information was available as to its presence in other parts of the Baltic Sea.

Therefore, it is worth mentioning that in August 1999, while investigating the bottom macrofauna in the Gulf of Gdańsk this species was recorded on sandy and sandy-muddy sea bottoms at 0.5 - 10 m, in the vicinity of the Gdynia harbour. As it seems, this species has already been well adapted to that area as it was recovered not only while bottom dragging, but was also found in samples taken by small bottom scoops as well. The initial data give evidence that the density of the newcomer may amount to 1000 individuals/1m<sup>2</sup> at the bottom. What is quite interesting, is the fact that different stages of the specimens were encountered, almost exclusively pregnant females.

In November 1999, I had an E-mail message from Prof. Erkki Leppäkoski which said that this aggressive species had already conquered more area of the Baltic Sea having propagated itself northbound for it has been spotted in the central part of the Gulf of Bothnia (63° N), i.e. somewhere near the city of Vaasa.

As it is clear to see, the spiny water flea *Cercopagis pengoi* finds no obstacles in spreading over all the Baltic Sea. The observations carried out so far have allowed the statement that the species inhabits more and more area along the coast of the Baltic Sea, at least 100 km a year. As a result, one may expect its presence in the western parts of the Sea.

Interestingly enough, the *Cercopagis pengoi* has also been recorded across the Atlantic Ocean, in Lake Ontario - the most westbound of the Great Lakes of North America (MacIsaac et al. 1998).

## SUMMARY

The Ponto-Caspian cladocera *Cercopagis pengoi* invaded the Baltic Sea in 1992. For the first time it was recorded in the Gulf of Riga and three years later it appeared in the Gulf of Finland. In the summer of 1999 it had been also found in huge numbers in shallow areas (0.5 - 10 m) of the Gulf of Gdańsk.

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