POPULATION PARAMETERS AND DISTRIBUTION OF *Arenaeus cribrarius* (CRUSTACEA, PORTUNOIDEA), IN SOUTHEASTERN BRAZILIAN COAST

**Abstract**

To test the hypothesis of differential occupation of depths by demographic groups of *A. cribrarius*, their population structure, spatial-temporal distribution and sex ratio were studied, taking environmental factors into consideration. The animals were collected monthly during one year in Ubatuba, southeastern coast of Brazil, at nine different depths. There was no deviation from the pattern 1:1 sex ratio, and also no significant difference in size between the sexes. Reproductive activity was continuous, but more intense in the summer. It was possible to verify that there is differential occupation of space by demographic groups of *A. cribrarius*. Juveniles occupy shallower regions, which probably provide them with protection of predation. Adult males are more often collected in regions near these juveniles, probably in order to maximize the chances of finding primiparous females. Finally, adult females were more associated to deeper regions, where larval dispersal is facilitated by the influence of the movement of water mass. (AU)