

## **BIODIVERSITY OF THE MEIOFAUNA WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON HARPACTICOID COPEPODS IN TROPICAL SEAGRASS BEDS IN PUJADA BAY, THE PHILIPPINES**

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Species diversity varies with the spatial scale on which it is studied; the three different spatial levels of biodiversity are alpha, beta and gamma diversity. Alpha diversity measures packing within a community reflecting how finely species divide ecological resources. Beta diversity is used to measure the amount of turnover along environmental gradients, showing habitat selection or specialization. Gamma diversity is similar to beta diversity but it describes a much larger spatial scale, it illustrates the degree of provinciality or endemism in the biota, the allopatric distribution of closely related taxa as well as the changes in the physical environment within a given habitat type.

This study describes the meiofauna biodiversity of Pujada Bay's seagrass beds with special emphasis on harpacticoid copepods, complementing global scale studies of this group with an outcome that may be used to test and discuss the hypothesis of 'high diversity in the East-Indian region'.