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## ZOOPLANKTON DISTRIBUTION ACROSS THE BRACKISH AND FRESHWATER ZONE OF THE SCHELDT ESTUARY

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Zooplankton diversity and distribution in the brackish and freshwater zone of the Scheldt is studied, as a continuation of preceeding studies held in the periods 1967-1969 and 1995-1997. We report on the species diversity and abundance of the zooplankters, collected on a monthly basis, in 20 sampling sites along the salinity gradient. Calanoids occur mainly in the brackish part, with *Eurytemora affinis*, *Acartia tonsa* and *Eudiaptomus gracilis* as the dominant species. These species are far less common in the freshwater transect. In the freshwater region, rotifers (i.e. *Brachionus calyciflorus*, *Keratella quadrata*, among others), cyclopids (i.e. *Acanthocyclops robustus*, *Cyclops vicinus*) and cladocerans (*Daphnia longispina*, *Bosmina longirostris*...) are the dominant zooplankters.

In addition, we report the presence of several species which were not detected in the former studies, such as the rotifers *Brachionus leydigi* var. *quadratus*, *Notholca labis*, *Platylabus quadricornis*, *Euchlanis dilatata*, *Gastropus hyptopus*, *Testudinella patina*, *Polyarthra dolichoptera* and *Trichotria* sp.; the cladocerans *Acroperus harpae* and *Biapertura affinis*, and the harpacticoid *Bryocamptus* (*Bryocamptus*) *minutus*.