

INTRODUCTION

Among the marine planktonic crustacea, the amphipods frequently play an important role in the economy of the sea. In general, they rank third in numerical abundance; they are far exceeded by the copepods and euphausiids (Bowman, 1960:343). In the cool-water regions, the pelagic amphipods sometimes appear extremely abundant (Edward, 1868:167; Bate and Westwood, 1868, v. 2:526; Norman, 1909:26; Behning, 1939:356), but in the tropical and subtropical regions they are not usually found in large numbers (Bowman, 1960:343).

The planktonic amphipods used in this study were obtained from the Naga Expedition, 1959-1961, which was sponsored by the governments of the United States of America, South Viet-Nam, and Thailand.

Although most of the earlier works of the hyperiids collected by various oceanographic expeditions have been summarized and revised by many authors, e.g. Bovallius (1887, 1887a, 1889, 1890), Stebbing (1888), Vosseler (1901), Stephensen (1924, 1925), Bowman (1953), Fage (1960), Vinogradov (1960), Shih (1969), only few of these reports have been published for the collections from some parts of these study areas (Colosi, 1918; Fage, 1960; and Shih, 1969).

The objectives of this research can be divided into three major parts:

1. To investigate the relationship between the oceanic form of hyperiids in the South China Sea and the shallow water form in the Gulf of Thailand.
2. To investigate the distribution of the hyperiids in these areas with references to some physical oceanographic conditions.
3. To observe the seasonal variations of their distribution.