Biology of Mediterranean and Caribbean Thalassinidea

Among burrowing organisms, the most complex and extensive burrow systems are found within the Thalassinidea. This group of decapods comprises some 520+ species in currently 11 families and 80+ genera. They live predominantly in very shallow waters, where they often occur in high densities and influence the whole sedimentology and geochemistry of the seabed.

In this contribution I present results of studies on the biology of several Mediterranean (Upogebia pusilla, U. tipica, Callianassa tyrrhena, C. candida, Jaxea nocturna) and Caribbean (Axiopsis serratifrons, Neocallichirus grandimana, Glypturus acanthochirus, Corallianassa longiventris) species.

Of special interest is the occurrence of debris-filled chambers in the burrows of two callianassid species, Callianassa tyrrhena and Corallianassa longiventris. The possible role of this introduced plant material for the nutrition of the shrimps is discussed.