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Burrowing Polychaete Worms from a New Zealand Estuary

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Abstract

A list of polychaete worms from intertidal soft bottom areas in the Heathcote Estuary is given together with a key to species. Two new species are described and two cosmopolitan estuarine species are reported for the first time from New Zealand seas.

INTRODUCTION

THIS paper presents part of the results of an ecological survey of the polychaetes found in the intertidal sand and mudbanks of the Heathcote Estuary near Christchurch, New Zealand. This survey was the subject of an M.Sc. thesis from the Zoology Department, University of Canterbury.

Five transects from high to low water mark were spaced along the southern side of the estuary and stations with a known time of exposure to air at low tide were established on each transect. Five samples were obtained from each station between November, 1960, and December, 1961, at approximately two-month intervals. The list of species found in these collections is set out below. As only a few collections were made on the northern side of the estuary the list cannot be considered a complete one for the entire estuary.

An indication of sediment type and lower salinity limit is given for each species. Water samples were taken from the water's edge at the collecting stations on flooding and ebbing tides and their salinity determined (see Estcourt, 1966: 180, for method). The lowest value found is given as the minimum salinity to which polychaetes at that station may be subjected.

SPECIES LIST

ERRANTIA

Family POLYNOIDAE

*Lepidasthenia accolus* n.sp.

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