

Progress Report of the JSPS sub-project on Benthic Biodiversity

Tetsuya Kato, Robin Rigby and Yoshihisa Shirayama

Seto Marine Biological Laboratory, Field Science Education and Research Center,
Kyoto University

The Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) Multinational Collaboration on Marine Coastal Science Project sub project on Benthic Biodiversity is officially collaborating with the Census of Marine Life (CoML) field project Natural Geography in Shore Areas (NaGISA). Establishing JSPS members as national coordinators for NaGISA has facilitated the coordination of this mutually beneficial arrangement. Cooperation has occurred on levels of data collection (sampling), identification (exchange of taxonomic expertise), education (taxonomic workshops) and publication (field guides).

Co-operation between the JSPS sub project on Benthic Biodiversity and NaGISA is intended to promote benthic marine biodiversity in the Western Pacific coastal area more efficiently. Both organizations focus on the exploration of marine biodiversity in the coastal area and both are dedicated to taxonomic competence. Current areas of partnership include taxonomic workshops that benefit both groups and cooperation on field guide publication.

The workshops whether funded by JSPS or NaGISA have been opened to members of both organizations and young scientists (including graduate students), who are currently studying benthos taxonomy and/or ecology.

Samples collected during NaGISA field session are used for the production of JSPS field guides and the JSPS field guides will in turn be used for future identification of NaGISA samples and the education of young scientists and university/high school students through out the Western Pacific.

The 2004 taxonomy and identification training workshop was held at the Institute of Oceanography, Nha Trang, Vietnam, 30 Sep - 3 Oct 2004. It was co-organized by Pham Dhin Trong (National Center for Natural Sciences and Technology of Vietnam) and Yoshihisa Shirayama of (Kyoto University, Japan). Eighteen participants from five Asian countries (Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, Japan and Vietnam) were trained in the identification of Amphipods to the genus level by two amphipod specialists, Prof Manuel Ortiz Touzet (Centro de Investigaciones Marinas, Universidad de La Habana, Cuba) and Prof Dang Ngoc Thanh (National Centre for Natural Science and Technology of Vietnam). The next taxonomic training workshop targeting decapod crustaceans, will be held in Bali Indonesia in September 2005, financially supported by CoML Indonesia.

Delays in national activities resulted in the setting of new timelines for the publication of the JSPS field guides at the national leaders meeting in Nha Trang (October 2, 2004). The deadline for English manuscripts is now Dec 24, 2004 and the intent is that these field guides will be published and ready for distribution on July 1, 2005 with bi-lingual editions to follow with in the same year.