

# FROM THE DEPTH: DIVERSITY AND ORIGIN OF THE ANTARCTIC TANAIDACEA

## Summary

Tanaidacea, are small, few millimetres long crustaceans inhabiting almost all marine benthic habitats. Currently, there are known over 1200 species of tanaids, but it is assumed that the number in the World Ocean might be one order of magnitude higher. Tanaidacea in the Southern Ocean are represented by 160 species classified to 66 genera and 20 families and three suborders. Clear domination of eyeless and phylogenetically young representatives of Tanaidacea on Antarctic shelf indicate

for its deep-sea origin. It is supposed that Tertiary glaciations of the Antarctic is responsible for the extinction of Mesozoic fauna. The vacant niches were occupied by psychrophilic and eurybathic deep-sea taxa due to the phenomenon of an emergence. The similarity of fauna on Australian and Antarctic shelves indicates that that process might take a place in Palaeocene or Eocene, when both continents were not fully separated and both laid within the polar circle.