

FACTORS LIMITING COMPETITION OF THE BURYING BEETLES (*COLEOPTERA: NICROPHORUS*)

Summary

Beetles of the *Nicrophorus* species (burying beetles) under the pressure from scavengers developed a number of mechanisms that reduce negative impact of rivals. The most important mechanism is extensive parental care provided by the male and female. Burying beetles conceal carcasses underground and prepare them for the consumption by their young. Parents stay in the resources until the offspring transforms to the pupa. But equally important part of reduced competition strategies is phenology of burying beetles. Habitat preferences and seasonal activity of the *Nicrophorus* species are correlated with the presence of competitors. Usually

burying beetles occurring at the same time, occupy different habitat. During the autumn period niche releases are observed, because species only need feeding before hibernation. Beetles of *Nicrophorus* species mostly are active from late afternoon to the nightfall. But diurnal activity of burying beetles depends also of competition from other insects. Beetles active at the same time, prefer different habitats. However, the beetles occupying the same habitat have their peaks of diurnal activity shifted relative to each other. Another mechanism which might reduce competition from other carrion beetles is carcasses preferences.