EFFECTS OF COASTAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF MACROBENTHIC ASSEMBLAGES IN THE SHALLOW INTRERTIDAL WATERS OF THE GULF OF SUZE, EGYPT

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The regional distribution of macro benthic assemblages of the shallow intertidal waters and the configuration for the beach side of the Gulf of Suez were studied over 241 km from Ras Mohammed to Ras Sudr (35 stations) and over 346 km from south of Ghardaqa to Ain Sukhna (71 stations). Large amount of litters, tar balls, and aged oil patches were accumulated on the beach and shoreline of the middle parts of the Gulf due to the oil spills from the offshore oil wells. The distribution of the shallow intertidal benthic communities showed a great distinction in the different sites. They were more dense and diverse on the hard and cobble bottom in comparison to the muddy sand and sandy substrata. Macro-algae Laurancia, Sargassum, Cystoseira, Turbinaria, Halimeda and Caulerpa were more frequent among the coral reefs assemblages (Radianthus, Xenia, Heteroxina, Stylophora, Acropora and Millopora). The benthic fauna were predominated by Mollusca (Acanthopleura, Chiton, Trochus, Brachiodontes, Chama and Tridacna), Cirripedia (Tetraclida and Chthamalus) and Echinoderms (Ophicoma, Echinometra and Diadema).