

Preliminary data on the *Posidonia* meadows and associated macrozoobenthic community of Sazani island (Albania)

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The seagrass *Posidonia oceanica* meadows are scarcely studied in the Albanian coast. Data presented in this work have been collected during an assessment of benthic communities of Sazani Island, Albania, in May 2013. The *P. oceanica* meadow has a limited distribution around this island, covering a relatively small area on its eastern coast. Although this meadow seems to be under degradation, it is still a good shelter for high species number and high abundance of benthic macroinvertebrates. The highest species richness and abundance has been recorded for sponges, hydrozoans, gastropods, bivalves, polychaetes, echinoderms, bryozoans and ascidians. The sciaphilic and photophilic communities were clearly evident, associated respectively to the *P. oceanica* rhizomes and leaves. Referring to the species richness and abundance, a rapid assessment of ecological and environmental state of benthic macroinvertebrate community has been done. Other parameters used for the assessment of the state of *P. oceanica* meadow have also been recorded, and possible reasons for the degradation of the meadow have been highlighted. These assessments of the benthic macroinvertebrate community and the state of seagrass meadow are also important within the framework of monitoring, conservation and management of the only Marine Protected Area of Albania, where Sazani Island is a core area.