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JULY 7-10th 2025

SUMMER MEETING

THE CRUSTACEAN SOCIETY



The Crustacean Society TCS Summer Meeting



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Keynote Abstract

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CEPI01 - CONSERVATION / INVASIVE SPECIES/ ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION **Thursday, July 10th 2025 10:00-10:20**

NIS IN THE CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN: THE SUSPENSION-FEEDING RICH PERACARIDA COMMUNITIES IN ITALIAN PORTS

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The introduction and spread of marine non-indigenous species (NIS) are considered major environmental threats to marine biodiversity. Due to their association to artificial floating or submerged structures, fouling communities commonly host the majority of peracarid NIS. However, current literature doesn't focus on the peracarid assemblage on the whole as much as it should, considering they constitute an important trophic link between primary producers and higher trophic levels or all trophic niches they inhabit; how they can be both primary foulers or secondary foulers; or more pressingly how this superorder contains a notably high number of NIS. The aim of this work is to inquire into the variability and dynamism of peracarid fauna in the key sites of the Palermo and Trapani ports, both highly anthropized recreational boating spots located in the centre of the Mediterranean and facing two protected marine areas, Ustica Island and Egadi Islands. We identified 734 peracarids belonging to 15 different species. Of these 15 species, 6 were NIS or cryptogenic species. *Caprella scaura* Templeton, 1836 was abundant in both ports and surpassed the other predator, the NIS *Paranthura japonica* Richardson, 1909, likely due to its plasticity in feeding behaviour, being able to rely on filter-feeding as an adult instead of being limited to predatory tactics. The cryptogenic species *Jassa slatteryi* Conlan, 1990 was only found in the port of Trapani. This grazer is efficient in the creation of detritus. In its stead we found the detritivorous tubicolous amphipod *Eritchtonius brasiliensis* (Dana, 1853) in Palermo station. The highly invasive detritivorous, tubicolous NIS *Laticorophium baconi* (Shoemaker, 1934) was found in both sites, but with greater abundance in Trapani. *Chondrochelia savignyi* (Kroyer, 1842) was abundant at the port of Trapani, confirming its preference of greater water turnover. The sampled sites showed an ample variety of peracarid species occupying the available trophic niches of a community characterized by NIS suspension-feeders. New records of NIS from this work are *L.baconi* in both Trapani and Palermo and *J.slatteryi* and *C.scaura* in Trapani.

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