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Living coccolithophores community from Southern Tyrrhenian Sea (Central Mediterranean - Summer 2009)

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Abstract

We present data on distribution patterns of living coccolithophores at 18 selected hydrographic stations, and oceanographic measurements collected at 68 stations during the TIR09 cruise carried out on board of R/V Urania in the southern Tyrrhenian Sea (central part of the Mediterranean Sea) during summer 2009. The survey enabled us to provide indications on the structure of calcareous phytoplankton associations in relation to oceanographic parameters and vertical water column stratification. The total number of coccospheres ranged from less than 100 l^{-1} cells to $\sim 6.8 \cdot 10^4 \text{ l}^{-1}$ cells (mean $8.28 \cdot 10^3 \text{ l}^{-1}$ cells). *Emiliania huxleyi* dominated the assemblages, followed by *Gephyrocapsa* spp., small placoliths, *Calciosolenia* spp., *Florisphaera profunda*, Holococcolithophores spp., *Syracosphaera pulchra* and *Umbellosphaera tenuis*. The coccolithophore community showed a typical vertical zonation, with K-strategist taxa in the upper 75 m and the deep community down to 200 m. The local water circulation and summer stratification significantly affected the spatial and vertical distribution of coccolithophores.

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