DIVERSITY OF THE MACRO-PEDOFAUNA ON MEGANISI AND ITS SATELLITE ISLETS (CENTRAL IONIAN SEA, GREECE)

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The fauna of the Greek islands has always attracted ecologists' interest, mainly due to their particular geological history and topography. However, still little is known about the Ionian Islands' fauna contrary to that of the Aegean archipelago. Since the Ionian Islands have been isolated from the mainland rather recently (Late Pleistocene), no surprising differences from the mainland are expected in terms of species composition; however, the identification of special diversity patterns is of particular interest. The present study is a preliminary contribution to the qualitative composition of the macro-pedofauna of Meganisi Island and the satellite islets Kythros and Thilia, located in the Internal Ionian Archipelago, which is a Natura 2000 site (GR 2220003). We estimated and compared species diversity among different habitats between and within islands, and among different seasons during the year. We used pitfall traps to collect animal samples during autumn 2010 and spring and summer 2011. Statistical analysis of the faunal data didn't support a general pattern of species abundance and diversity among the different habitats, but on the other hand, revealed a clear seasonal pattern with a significant increase of abundance and richness during summer. The results probably reflect the relatively recent isolation of the islands and the short distances between them, as well as idiosyncratic responses of species in habitat variation.