A PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF ZOOPLANKTON SPECIES GROUPINGS AND ASSOCIATED OCEANOGRAPHICALLY DEFINED REGIONS ALONG THE BRITISH COLUMBIA MAINLAND COAST

Grant A. Gardner
Ocean Ecology Laboratory*
Institute of Ocean Sciences
P.O. Box 6000
Sidney, British Columbia
V8L 4B2, Canada

INTRODUCTION

Although the physical and hydrographic characteristics of most British Columbia fjords are well known (e.g. Pickard and Stanton, this volume; Pickard 1961), the biological characteristics have never been comprehensively surveyed. Several papers have considered biological problems in geographically restricted areas, and others have concentrated on the Straits of Georgia and Juan de Fuca due to their convenient locations and commercial importance. Prior to the present study, however, only one geographically extensive work existed (LeBrasseur 1954). Despite the importance of the coastline, many areas had never been sampled, there was little information on species distribution patterns and still less on differences in plankton community composition along the coast. Even LeBrasseur had taken few deep water tows and dealt only with broad taxonomic groups.

The study summarized here represents a first attempt to study coastal scale patterns in plankton community composition. The basic premise of the study is that broad grouping patterns can be identified in both the plankton and hydrography of British Columbia mainland fjords and near shore waters. Although Pickard (1961) coarsely segregated fjords on the basis of runoff regime, no biological

* Current address: Department of Biology, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, A1B 3X9.

H. J. Freeland et al. (eds.), Fjord Oceanography
Figure 1. Locations of stations occupied in April 1977.