

MORPHOLOGICAL VARIATIONS IN ASTACUS ASTACUS L. AND AUSTROPOTAMOBIOUS PALLIPES (LEREBoullet) POPULATIONS



Genetic studies on crayfish have shown that the differences between crayfish populations can be greater than it is assumed at the first view. Studies have demonstrated that some of these differences are not only found in the genome but are also expressed in the morphology of crayfish. Statistical analysis of a large set of morphological parameters from several autochthonous crayfish populations of *Astacus astacus* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *Austropotamobius pallipes* (Lereboullet, 1858) were applied in order to define distinct characteristics of different populations. Preliminary results of a multivariate discriminant analysis suggest that some morphological parameters are useful attributes to identify distinct populations. A positive correlation was obtained between carapace shape, described as the ratio postorbital length/width of carapace, and carapace curvature. Our results showed that the development and application of methods to characterize the uniqueness of individual populations is important, especially when they may have adapted in various ways to specific environmental conditions due to separation for a long time.

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