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Recommended Citation

Grant, G. C., & Berkowitz, S. P. (1979) An environmental assessment of the summer plankton in the vicinity of the C.P. Crane generating station. Special scientific report; no. 92.. Virginia Institute of Marine Science, William & Mary. http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/m2-9a6r-ms39

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AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SUMMER PLANKTON IN THE VICINITY OF THE C. P. CRANE GENERATING STATION

By George C. Grant and Stephen P. Berkowitz

January, 1979

Special Scientific Report No. 92

Virginia Institute of Marine Science Gloucester Point, VA 23062

ABSTRACT

A preliminary survey of summer plankton in waters surrounding the C. P. Crane generating station in Bengies, Maryland, revealed several possible effects of plant operation. These perturbations were separated into apparent small-scale and large-scale effects:

Small-scale effects were limited to the immediate discharge region of Saltpeter Creek and included (1) occasional elevation of temperatures at the surface (in August) to above the lethal limit for most zooplankton and sufficiently high to inhibit photosynthesis, (2) a decrease in chlorophyll-a, seen in July and August, (3) a sharp decrease in productivity, also in July and August, and (4) absence of a common cladoceran in July.

Possible large-scale effects covered most of the sampled area and included (1) a reduction in diversity due to displacement of a natural freshwater community with an oligohaline one that has been altered somewhat by the addition of heat, (2) increased temperature and productivity throughout Saltpeter Creek and the lower Gunpowder River when higher ambient temperatures coincide with peak demand for electric power and (3) an increase in the barnacle population by the provision of submerged power plant structures for settlement of larvae and the distribution of larvae throughout the system via cooling water discharged into Saltpeter Creek.

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Table 11 Diversity (H'), evenness (J') and species richness (d) of 18.5 cm bongo collections (202 \textsterling m mesh nets) at the C. P. Crane generating station, July - September 1978. Stations designated A: Seneca Creek, intake; B: Saltpeter and Dundee creeks, near discharge; C: lower Saltpeter Creek; D: lower Gunpowder River ••• .

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introductory Remarks and a Brief Description of the Study Area

The operation of electric power generating stations produces changes in environmental parameters in the immediate and surrounding regions. The two most obvious and probably most critical influences on aquatic life are the entrainment of organisms and the elevation of water temperatures, both due to the use of adjacent water bodies for cooling purposes. When estuarine waters are utilized, particular attention must be directed toward assessing effects on the biota, as these waters are often important spawning and nursery grounds for eeologically and economically valuable crustaceans and fishes.

Regulations governing the operation of generating stations in Maryland specify that studies be conducted to "determine whether plant cooling water entrainment affects a spawning or nursery area of consequence for Representative Important Species (RIS)", which are specified (State of Maryland, 1978). Since lower trophic levels provide food for the RIS, the primary producers and zooplankton must also be studied for possible plant effects. The regulations also specify that impact be assessed during "critical periods", defined as "that time of the year during which sensitive life stages or densities of RIS are present in the plant intake or receiving waters." If significant adverse impact is demonstrated,

plant modifications may be required to bring harmful effects within acceptable limits, as defined by the regulations.

The C. P. Crane Generating Station is located on·an isthmus between Seneca Creek, from which cooling water is drawn, and Saltpeter Creek, which receives the heated discharge. Both creeks empty into the lower Gunpowder River, a tributary of upper Chesapeake Bay. The area is oligohaline in a portion of Chesapeake Bay strongly affected by runoff from the Susquehanna River, the principal source of fresh water for Chesapeake Bay. The study area is generally shallow, with depths of 1-2 meters MLW, except for deeper channels in Seneca Creek and lower Gunpowder River. The C. P. Crane station is an oil-fired plant that circulates about 650 cubic feet of water per second through the cooling system when operating at its peak load of 400 megawatts.

1.2 Other Studies in the Vicinity

No previous studies of the plankton have been conducted at Seneca, Saltpeter and Dundee creeks. In a study of the Bush River, the next embayment up the Chesapeake Bay from the present site, two stations were periodically sampled within the lower Gunpowder River (Johns Hopkins Univ., 1973). The latter study, an investigation of the Perryman site, is most pertinent to our findings, because of ecological similarities between these neighboring subestuaries. A concurrent study of waters around the

C. P. Crane station is also being conducted by Ecological Analysts, Inc. for Baltimore Gas and Electric Company, but results were not available at the time of this report. Physical effects of thermal discharges were examined in July 1978 by Binkerd et al. (1978).

Studies in other areas of the upper Chesapeake Bay include those of the Bay proper (Dovel, 1971a; Whaley and Taylor, 1968), Baltimore Harbor (Dovel, 1971b; Johns Hopkins Univ., 1972), and the Rhode River (Seliger and Loftus, 1974; Allan et al., 1976). The more distant Patuxent River has been well studied (Heinle, 1966, 1969; Herman et al., 1968). Results of these studies are helpful in predicting the approximate qualitative composition of the plankton in the present study site, but lack of pre-operational data at the site renders an assessment of biological impact more difficult.

1.3 Objectives and Limitations of the Present Study

The present study was designed to:

 (1) Characterize the summer and early fall mero- and holoplankton of Seneca Creek, Saltpeter Creek and the lower Gunpowder River

(2) Determine whether the C. P. Crane Generating Station demonstrably alters in situ productivity, phytoplankton and zooplankton standing crops, species composition, and reproduction of the dominant copepods.

The sampling was limited to single 2-3 day periods in each of the months July - September; sampling during other months, particularly the critical spring and early summer spawning period is necessary for a more complete assessment. Sampling was conducted on an already altered environment and without benefit of comparable data from years prior to operation of the C. P. Crane generating station; the system's natural state is therefore obscure. Finally, zooplankton sampling was concentrated on collections from pumps and from 18.5 cm bongo nets of 202 μ m mesh, all of which were obtained in daylight hours. The more agile forms of zooplankton were, therefore, undersampled.

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

2.1 The Sampling Scheme

Sampling, in this preliminary survey, was limited to the summer months of July, August and September. Assumptions concerning the distribution of plant effluent were incorporated in a grid of possible sampling sites and division of these into four subareas: A, intake waters of Seneca Creek; B, immediate discharge waters of upper Saltpeter Creek and Dundee Creek; C, far-field discharge waters of lower Saltpeter Creek; and D, the receiving waters of lower Gunpowder River (Fig. 1). The grids of stations $(0,1$ naut. mi. in subareas A-C and 0.2 naut. mi. in subarea D) were utilized in a random selection of sampling sites each month in the case of phytoplankton measurements. Twelve

- PHYTOPLANKTON STATIONS
- X 18.5 cm BONGO STATIONS
- (8) +PUMP SAMPLES
- $% +1/2$ METER NET
- · Fig. 1 Location and identity of stations sampled in the vicinity of the C. P. Crane generating station, July - September 1978, for phytoplankton, micro-, meso- and macrozooplankton.

111 filter fluorometer equipped with a red-sensitive photomultiplier (Strickland and Parsons, 1972); 50 ml of water was filtered through a glass fibre filter (Whatman GF/A), which was then frozen on dry ice. ·After extraction wtth 90% acetone, and centrifugation to remove the filter and particulate debris, the sample was diluted to 10 ml and the fluorescence read before and after acidification with 2 drops of 2N HCl using the appropriate excitation window. The excitation filter was 430 nm (Filter 5-60) and the emission was $>$ 625 nm (Filter 2-64); calibration was previously made against known dilutions of chlorophyll a extracts using the EPA Method Study 9, Chlorophyll Analyses.

Primary productivity was measured in situ using the light-dark bottle technique (Biological Methods Panel Committee on Oceanography, 1969) after 1.0 μ Ci of NaHCO₃ was added to each of six sub-samples of surface (0.5 m) water in glass tubes; three sub-samples were incubated in the dark and three were incubated in the light at ambient temperature and light intensity at 0.5 m for 2-3 hours, usually between 10:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. EDT. The uptake was terminated by the addition of 0.2 ml of borate-buffered formalin. ¹⁴C-labeled particulate matter was trapped on Millipore[®] HA 0.45 µ filters and counted using a 2-5diphenyloxazole toluene counting solution in a Beckman LS-150 liquid scintillation counter (Pugh, 1973). When necessary, an internal standard was added to determine efficiency and quenching. Computation of productivity (mgC $m^{-3}h^{-1}$) was then completed using

the stock of isotope added and the light, dark and alkalinity values.

Seston was determined gravimetrically using previously washed and tared Millipore® HAWP 04700, 0.45 μ filters (when available).

Phytoplankton were preserved with Lugol's iodine solution and identified and enumerated with an inverted microscope according to the method of Utermohl (1958).

2.2.2 Microzooplankton

Zooplankton smaller than those forms normally retained in 202 um mesh nets were sampled by pump (Flotec's Tempest submersible pump Model S1400). Pumping was conducted while in motion in a small outboard motor boat. Samples were integrated over the water column by raising and lowering the pump from near-bottom to near-surface during the operation, and quantified by pumping into carboys of known volume, which were then poured into a partially submerged $#20$ (76 μ m) net to concentrate collected organisms. At each sampling site, three replicate samples of 0.1 m^3 each were obtained and preserved in 5% formalin.

Preserved samples were stained with rose bengal to aid in sorting and identification of collected organisms in the laboratory. Most counts were performed at 45-60X and identifications at 100-1000X under a dissecting microscope. Separate counts were made of the naupliar, copepodid and adult

stages of the dominant copepods. The identification of collected cyclopoid copepods as Eucyclops agilis was confirmed from scanning electron microscope (SEM) photographs of the 5th legs.

2.2.3 Mesozooplankton

This size range of zooplankton has been defined (BMPCO, 1969) as those organisms retained in netting constructed of 202 um mesh. This mesh size retains the adults and later copepodid stages of most dominant estuarine copepods $(e.g.$ Acartia tonsa). It is too coarse for quantitative sampling of nauplii and the early copepodids of dominants, as well as certain small species such as Paracalanus crassirostris and Oithona spp., yet may frequently become clogged with phytoplankton when towed through blooms. Any choice of mesh size is a compromise of net efficiency (a function of open mesh area and mouth opening} and the size range and agility of targeted organisms (Jacobs and Grant, 1978). The present choice of 202 μ m mesh nets was based on BMPCO (1969) recommendations and past experience in Chesapeake Bay. Nets were mounted on bongo sampler frames with mouth openings of 18.5 em and towed obliquely through the water column at each of 12 fixed stations each month. The volume of water sampled during each tow was calculated from the number of revolutions registered on a General Oceanics, Inc. flowmeter mounted in the mouth of the collection net.

Collections, preserved in 5% formalin, were initially

measured for displacement volume (Kramer, 1972), then sorted under dark-field microscopes (Olympus JM-100) into major categories such as copepods, barnacle larvae and decapod larvae, with the size of aliquot examined dependent upon the abundance and relative size of the sorted category. Larger and rarer organisms were sorted from whole samples; successively smaller aliquots were sorted for the smaller, more abundant taxa. Identification of sorted organisms was carried out to species wherever possible and resulting counts (total sample counts) were entered on data cards, one for each species occurrence.

2.2.4 Macrozooplankton

The small-mouthed 18.5 cm bongo sampler is inefficient in the capture of larger or more agile zooplankton. A limited amount of sampling (3 replicated tows) was conducted each month, using a $1/2$ -meter net of 505 μ m mesh, to assess the presence and abundance of the larger (macro-) zooplankton. Ring nets were used despite the higher efficiency of bongo samplers because of our inability to tow 60 em bongos from a small outboard motor boat. Most estuarine copepods and other mesozooplankton, typically smaller than marine forms, easily pass through a net of $505 ~₁$ mm mesh. Resulting collections were, therefore, of low displacement volume and largely limited to certain taxa.

2.3 Data Processing

2.3.1 Phytoplankton and Ancillary Data ·

Phytoplankton productivity, biomass and certain of the

ancillary data (temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, phaeopigments) were examined with a canonical discriminant function analysis (Nie et al., 1975) to quantify and identify differences between subareas in these parameters.

2.3.2 Microzooplankton

Pumped microzooplankton collections were compared by month and subarea, again with a discriminant function analysis. The stepwise addition of variables provided a list of species (or life stages of a given species in the case of dominant copepods). contributing most to the separation of respective blocks of data (grouped by months and subarea).

2.3.3 The Larger Zooplankton

Collections taken with the 18.5 cm bongo (202 µm mesh nets) were compared with cluster analyses, both normal and inverse, without regard to pre-selected sampling strata. The analyses, based on matrices of the quantitative Bray-Curtis coefficient, employed transformed [log (x+1)] counts of identified taxa per 100 m^3 of water sampled. The normal analysis clustered samples (stations) according to similarity in species composition and abundance; the inverse analysis clustered species according to similarity in distribution among the stations (see Boesch, 1977; Grant, 1977, 1978). A flexible $(\beta = -0.25)$ clustering strategy was used to avoid excessive "chaining" (Williams, 1971).

The 18.5 em bongo collections were also used as the data set for calculations of diversity. Standard equations for calculations of H', the Shannon-Wiener index of diversity, and J', evenness, were used in computer programs (Pielou, 1975). Margalef's index of species richness was also calculated for each collection:

$d = S-1/log_{\rho}N$

where S is the number of species in a collection and $log_{e}N$ is the natural log of the total number of individuals in a collection (Margalef, 1961).

3. PHYTOPLANKTON BIOMASS, PRODUCTIVITY AND ANCILLARY MEASUREMENTS

Data from the 16 phytoplankton stations sampled each month, including surface light and secchi disc readings, temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, seston, chlorophyll-a, phaeopigments, alkalinity and productivity, are included in the Appendix to this report in Table A-1.

3.1 Physical Measurements

Salinity at the study site increased slightly during the three months of investigation, with ranges of 0.63-1.66 °/oo in July, 1.85-2.40 °/oo in August, and 1.99-3.51 °/oo in September. The entire study area was oligohaline during summer 1978, but northern portions (Dundee Creek and Gunpowder River) quite likely

are fresh during winter and spring periods of higher runoff. Lowest salinities occurred in upper "D" stations of the Gunpowder River in both July and August, with salt content of the discharge creeks Saltpeter and Dundee apparently governed largely.by plant transfer of cooling waters from Seneca Creek (Binkerd et al., 1978). However, this apparent pattern was altered in September, when Dundee Creek appeared to be the primary source of fresh water for lower Saltpeter Creek. This could also have been a tidal effect, as early morning tides during both July and August sampling periods were at the late ebb stage but at slack low or early flood in September.

Highest temperatures occurred at the surface at stations closest to ·the plant discharge, although equally high temperatures were recorded at upper "D" stations in September. Ranges were 25.0-32.4°C in July, 28.6-33.4°C in August and 21.6-26.0°C in September. Although determination of the At due to passage of water through the plant is difficult because of leakage of discharge back into Seneca Creek via the "hole.in the wall", differences between average Seneca Creek temperatures and maximum recorded temperatures on the discharge side were approximately 5°C in July, 3.5°C in August and 2.5°C in September.

Whereas all phytoplankton stations were occupied within a few hours of mid-day, oxygen levels were consistently high, with no evidence of reduction to a point where stress in estuarine animals

might be expected. Diurnal, or at least dawn and dusk, measurements of oxygen content are still needed to determine whether temperature elevation and oxygen reduction interact in impacting the natural system.

Light penetration was low throughout the July-September study period, with Secchi disc readings averaging close to 0.6 meter in all three months. The disc disappeared in only 0.2 meter at one July station; greatest depths of visibility were 1.0 and 1.25 meters at two stations, all others falling below 1 meter. A rough inverse relationship between turbidity, measured as seston in mg/1 and Secchi disc depth is shown in Fig. 2 for the months of July and September. August measurements of seston were invalid due to a change in filter type and an excessive reduction in sample size. A large reduction in turbidity from July to September did not result in a corresponding sharp increase in water transparency, although data points from July sampling do indicate an inverse relationship between the parameters. Lower than expected Secchi readings in September may have been related to the generally lower incident radiation occurring over the study area in that time period (Table A-1).

3.2 Phytoplankton Biomass

Phytoplankton standing crop was estimated by measurement of chlorophyll-a and its decomposition products, the phaeopigments (B.M.P.C.O., 1969). Resulting measurements are shown in the

Fig. 2 Relationship of water transparency (Secchi disc depths) and turbidity near the C. P. Crane generating station in July and September 1978.

bottom halves of Figs. 3-5, where stations have been aligned according to their position relative to the plant location.

The amount of phaeopigment was fairly constant $(4-8 \frac{10}{12}g/1)$ at all July stations, while chlorophyll-a decreased from over 18 μ g/1 at the mouth of Seneca Creek to a minimum of 7 $_{41}g/1$ in the immediate discharge (station B01), fluctuated around an intermediate concentration in near- and far-field discharge waters of 'saltpeter and Dundee creeks, then rose to a maximum of over 23 ug/1 in the lower Gunpowder River. Because phaeopigments remained at relatively constant levels, changes in the chlorophyll-a/ phaeopigment ratio closely mirrored measurements of chlorophyll-a.

Phaeopigments in August increased slightly to concentrations of about $6-9 \mu g/1$. Concentrations were similar at all stations except C17 where they increased to nearly 11 μ g/1. The lowest value was recorded at station C33 and this station and station C17 represented the only two deviations in similarity of trends in measurements of chlorophyll-a and chlorophyll-a/phaeopigment ratios. Chlorophyll-a reached a peak of over 32 μ g/1 at the head of Seneca Creek, near the plant intake, then decreased to the low of \langle 10 μ g/1 in the immediate discharge. Chlorophyll-a then increased to nearly 20 μ g/1 in nearby stations in upper Saltpeter Creek, decreasing to nearly constant levels of 11 μ g/1 in lower Saltpeter Creek and Gunpowder River.

Phytoplankton biomass was considerably reduced in September

Fig. 3 Distribution of chlorophyll, phaeopigments, productivity and their associated ratios, July 1978. Stations aligned according to position relative to plant location.

Fig. 4 Distribution of chlorophyll, phaeopigments, productivity and their associated ratios, August 1978. Stations aligned according to position relative to plant location.

Fig. 5 Distribution of chlorophyll, phaeopigments, productivity and their associated ratios, September 1978. Stations aligned according to position relative to plant location.

compared with July and August, except at the mouth of Saltpeter Creek and in the lower Gunpowder River. Both phaeopigment and chlorophyll-a were fairly constant $(0.6-1.2 \text{ kg}/1 \text{ and } 4-7 \text{ kg}/1,$ respectively) throughout Seneca and Saltpeter creeks. Wide fluctuations in the generally high chlorophyll-a/phaeopigment ratio in this portion of the system resulted from small fluctuations in its components. A sharp increase in chlorophyll-a occurred at the mouth of Saltpeter Creek (station C22), with measurements from there to the mouth of Gunpowder River ranging from $12-18$ μ g/1 chlorophyll-a and $4-8$ μ g/1 phaeopigments. The ratio of these two measurements decreased to about 3 at the latter stations.

3.3 Phytoplankton Productivity

Productivity (upper portions of Figs. 3-5) roughly corresponded to levels of chlorophyll in July, i.e. with a minimum in the immediate discharge (station B01), a secondary maximum in upper Saltpeter Creek and highest levels in Gunpowder River. Trends in the assimilation ratio were similar to those of productivity except at the immediate intake and discharge stations. Productivity was similar at Seneca and lower Saltpeter Creek stations (15-21 mgC/hr/m³), increased from a low of 13 at station B01 to over 30 mgC/hr/m³ at the mouth of Dundee Creek in subarea B, and attained a maximum rate of 47.7 mgC/hr/m³ in the lower Gunpowder River.

Trends in productivity also followed those of chlorophyll-a in August through the intake and near-discharge subareas, but productivity increased sharply in the Gunpowder River while chlorophyll remained uniformly low. The assimilation ratio again followed productivity except in the immediate vicinity of the plant (stations A09 and B03). Productivity estimates ranged from 11 in lower Saltpeter Creek to over 55 mgC/hr/m³ at the mouth of Gunpowder River.

In September, productivity patterns were similar to those of chlorophyll except at stations C07 and C10 where submerged vegetation apparently shaded the suspended incubation vials. Assimilation ratios were much higher in intake and near-discharge areas than in previous months, so that the reversal in trends between this ratio and productivity near the plant is less evident in Fig. 5, but occurred at stations A12, B03 and B05. Productivity declined from 36 at the mouth of Seneca Creek to about 20 $mgC/hr/m^3$ at the juncture of Saltpeter and Dundee creeks. There was no sharp decrease in productivity at the immediate discharge. A maximum rate of nearly 49 mgC/hr/m³ was measured at the mouth of the Gunpowder River.

In the presence of elevated temperatures, the productivity of a phytoplankton population may be expected to increase, providing temperatures are not'so high as to inhibit photosynthesis (Nugent, 1970; McKellar, 1977). Depression of productivity at the

immediate discharge of the C. P. Crane plant, followed by increased productivity in receiving waters fits this pattern of inhibition and stimulation.

3.4 Phytoplankton Taxonomy

A limited number (12) of surface water samples were preserved for a taxonomic characterization of the surface phytoplankton community. The results (Table 1) show the oligohaline nature of the environment by an abundance of chlorophytes, presence of many blue-greens and a general shift in dominance through the summer from diatoms to blue-greens or microflagellates.

Attempts to relate species composition and abundance to observations on phytoplankton biomass and productivity are limited by the lack of replication in sampling, but include the following:

July - an abundance of green algae and Skeletonema costatum appears to have contributed most to the relatively high measures of chlorophyll and productivity at station D48, August - a peak of chlorophyll at station A09 coincides with an abundance of green algae and high productivity at stations A09 and D51 with green algae and Cryptomonas, September - maximum productivity and chlorophyll found at station D52 is not reflected in cell counts at that location.

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3.5 Subarea Differences in Phytoplankton and Ancillary Measurements

Data obtained from the 16 phytoplankton stations each month were entered into a canonical discriminant function analysis to determine the relative contribution of six variables (temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll-a, phaeopigments and productivity) to differences among subareas A-D. Results are presented in the form of summary statistics (Tables 2, 3 and 4) and as territorial maps of the first two discriminant functions with group centroids and discriminant scores for each station (Fig. 6).

Statistics in Tables 2-4 include those needed to show the number of functions required to clearly separate the groups (subareas). These are the eigenvalues and their associated canonical correlations found in the upper left side of the tables. The upper right side of the tables contain values for Wilks' lambda and X^2 significance as information is successively removed in discriminant functions. The larger the lambda, the less the discriminating power left, so Wilks' lambda is seen to increase as functions are added.

The left center of Tables 2-4 contains standardized discriminant function coefficients. These have been derived, in the SPSS program (Nie et al., 1975), in such a way that discriminant scores produced by multiplying these coefficients.

with each discriminating variable and summing results over all ,stations will produce a score for each function with a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. Therefore, absolute values of the coefficients are a measure of the relative importance of the variables within a function. Group centroids at the right center of these tables are simply averages of scores for all stations within subareas, and classification results at the bottom of the tables show the success of the calculated functions in correct placing of stations within subareas.

3.5.1 July 1978 Subarea Differences

Two functions based on all six of the entered variables were sufficient to account for over 96% of the variance. The third function did not contribute further to separation of the subareas (Table 2). Variables with the largest weights (absolute values of coefficients) in the first two functions were salinity and dissolved oxygen, respectively. Differences between subareas (indicated in Fig. 6 by solid lines for $p \leq 0.01$ and dashed lines for $p \leq 0.05$) were highly significant for all pairs of subareas that included subarea D (lower Gunpowder River), significant for the pairs A-B and A-C, but not significant for B and C subareas, where station scores showed considerable overlap and group centroids were closely spaced. Despite this overlap, all of the stations were correctly classified in this analysis (bottom of Table 2).

Table 2. Summary statistics from canonical discriminant function analysis of July 1978 phytoplankton and ancillary data.

 $* - p \le 0.05$ $** - p \le 0.01$ ns - not significant, $p > 0.05$

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Fig. 6 Territorial map, subarea centroids (x) and discriminant scores (·) for each phytoplankton station, based on the first two discriminant functions of July, August and September data.

The highest correlations evident in July 1978 data were:

- (1) -0.583 between phaeopigments and salinity ($p \le 0.05$)
- (2) -0.582 between productivity and temperature (p $\langle 0.05 \rangle$

(3) 0.506 between productivity and chlorophyll ($p < 0.05$) Phaeopigment concentrations $> 7.0 \text{ µg}/1 \text{ all occurred in salinities}$ lower than 1.3 ⁰/00 in subareas B, C and D. Concentrations \langle 7.0 μ g/1 were found in salinities higher than 1.0 $\frac{0}{100}$ and including half the stations in subareas B, G and D, and all of the subarea A (intake) stations. The negative correlation of productivity and temperature resulted primarily from the maximum temperature and minimum productivity measured at the immediate discharge and high productivity found in the lower temperatures of Gunpowder River.

A positive correlation between chlorophyll and productivity again showed extremes of relationships between low values at station BOl and highs in the lower Gunpowder River.

3.5.2 August 1978 Subarea Differences

The phytopigment variables, chlorophyll and phaeopigment, were dropped in the analysis of August data, as they were found not to increase separation of subarea centroids. In this analysis, the first two functions accounted for nearly 92% of the total variance (Table 3). Although contribution of the third function was still significant ($p = 0.0149$), it has been excluded from Fig. 6 for the sake of keeping a two-dimensional presentation

Table 3. Stimmary statistics from canonical discriminant function analysis of August 1978 phytoplankton and ancillary data.

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of results. As in July, the variables with largest weights in the first two functions were, respectively, salinity and dissolved oxygen. Differences between pairs of subareas were either highly significant ($p \le 0.01$) or, in the case of pairs A-D and B-D, significant at the level of $p \leq 0.05$. All but one of the 16 stations were correctly classified by the analysis: Station B28 was placed in subarea D in this classification. This station had the lowest salinity and temperature in its group, more nearly matching those of subarea D. Since both of these parameters had high weights in the first function, the result was predicted membership of that station in the D subarea.

Correlated variables in the August set of data included:

- (1) 0.801 between temperature and salinity, a result of relatively sharp gradients in both these measurements from the plant discharge through subareas B and C to the lower Gunpowder River
- (2) 0.534 between chlorophyll and dissolved oxygen (p < 0.05), and
- (3) 0.407 between chlorophyll and productivity ($p > 0.05$, not significant).

Lowest measurements of dissolved oxygen and chlorophyll were recorded at the immediate discharge (station B03), highest measurements at the intake station A09. The relationship of productivity and chlorophyll was less evident, as reflected in

their lower correlation.

3.5.3 September 1978 Subarea Differences

The first two functions from September data accounted for 98% of the total variance, with phaeopigment deleted as not contributing to further discrimination among subareas. The third function was not significant ($p = 0.5135$, Table 4). Variables with largest weights in the first two functions were productivity and chlorophyll, respectively. Differences between subareas A (intake) and B (discharge), were insignificant. Differences between all other pairs of subareas were significant ($p \n\leq .05$; B-C, B-D, C-D) or highly significant $(p \nvert .01; A-C, A-D)$.

All but one of the stations were correctly classified by the analysis (station Al2, nearest the plant intake was placed among discharge stations). The slightly higher temperature and lower salinity at this station, compared with other stations in Seneca Creek, may have resulted from recycling of discharge waters through the plant's "hole in the wall" and contributed to the station's predicted membership in the discharge group of stations, and to the lack of discrimination between subareas A and B.

Highest correlations between variables in September included:

(1) 0.937 between chlorophyll and phaeopigment (p < 0.01)

(2) 0.762 between chlorophyll and productivity (p < 0.01)

(3) 0.752 between phaeopigment and productivity (p $\langle 0.01 \rangle$ The latter can only be considered a result of the high correlation

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Table 4. Summary statistics from canonical discriminant function analysis of September 1978 phytoplankton and ancillary data.

 $* - p \ge 0.05$ $** - p \leq 0.01$

ns - not significant, $p > 0.05$

between chlorophyll and phaeopigment. Phytopigments (an estimate of biomass) varied from lower values in subareas A and B to highest values in the lower Saltpeter Creek and Gunpowder River. Productivity was similarly distributed except for two abnormally low rates in lower Saltpeter Creek in the presence of interfering submerged vegetation.

4. MICROZOOPLANKTON

Four stations (A08, BOl, C30 and D32) were sampled each month by pump for microzooplankton. Resulting identifications and counts may be found in Table A2 of the Appendix. Dominants included developmental stages of Acartia tonsa and Eurytemora affinis in all July collections except those from the near-discharge (station BOl) where the cladoceran Moina micrura was the dominant. A. tonsa and E. affinis predominated in all August collections, although barnacle larvae had increased in importance. Barnacle nauplii were dominant in September at the plant discharge, while collections at the remaining three locations were again dominated by A . tonsa and E . affinis. The number of species found in any individual collection varied from 6-13 in July, 3-8 in August and 3-10 in September.

Molluscs, the rotifer Brachionus calyciflorus, and unidentified insects occurred only sporadically, while the Cladocera, the identified copepods and barnacle larvae were frequent and generally abundant. The cladocerans, all of which are only slightly tolerant of salinity, were distributed in greatest diversity and abundance in

stations of lowest salinity. Possible plant effects in this group were limited, in this set of data, to the absence of Diaphanosoma sp. at the discharge in July. Nauplii of Acartia tonsa were proportionally reduced at the discharge in July, but not in other months. The many hard surfaces added to an ecosystem by the addition of structures in power plants provide a favorable environment for barnacles. The Crane plant, as a result of such an increase in adult barnacles, increases the natural density of barnacle larvae, evident in the relatively large catches at station BOl in August and September.

Data from pumped samples of microzooplankton were submitted to a computer program for discriminant function analysis (SPSS), grouped initially by month of collection and station. Input data included transformed counts per 0.1 m^3 for stages of development in the case of Acartia tonsa, Eurytemora affinis (nauplii, copepodids, adults) and barnacle larvae (nauplii and cyprids), and for species or higher taxa for all other elements in the collections.

The number of taxa (variables) in these collections exceeded the number that could be included in a stepwise analysis, so the significance of variables was first determined for each month by running a direct analysis. The seven taxa having the lowest Wilk's lambda were then analyzed in a stepwise manner (7 was the maximum number that could be treated in a stepwise analysis with the number of groups and replicates existing in our microzooplankton data).

4.1 July 1978 Subarea Differences

The first two functions, based on the six variables retained in the analysis (Acartia tonsa nauplii, Eurytemora affinis copepodids and adults, Diaphanosoma sp., Moina micrura amd Scottolana canadensis) accounted for nearly all of the variance. The first function alone accounted for over 99% of the variance (Table 5). Highest coefficients were for Diaphanosoma sp. in the first function: these were absent in the discharge station B01 and increased in the order shown in Fig. 7 at stations A08, C30, and D32. Separation of the latter two stations was aided by the second function in which Moina micrura held the largest coefficient. All of the replicates were correctly classified by station, and differences among stations were all highly significant $(p < 0.01)$.

4.2 August 1978 Subarea Differences

The first two functions, based on the six variables retained in the analysis (Table 6), accounted for over 97% of the variance. The third function was still significant $(p = 0.0210)$. Highest coefficients in the first two functions were those for chydorids and Acartia tonsa nauplii, respectively. Chydorids were actually absent at the A, B and D stations as were Eucyclops agilis, another species with a high coefficient in the first function. The distribution of stations along the axis of the first function (Fig. 7, August) is closer to the observed abundance of Eurytemora

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Table 5. Summary statistics from canonical discriminant function analysis of July 1978 microzooplankton collections.

ns - not significant, $p > 0.05$

 $Fig. 7$ Fig. 7 Territorial map, station centroids (x) and discriminant scores (.) for each replicate sample of microzooplankton, based on the first two discriminant functions of July, August and September data.

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 $* - p \le 0.05$

 $*$ + $-p \leq 0.01$

affinis nauplii with its lower and negative coefficient. Differences between station 032 and all others were highly significant. Differences between A08 and BOl, and BOl and C30, were significant at a $p = \langle 0.05 \text{ level.}$

Classification of replicates into actual station location was 100% correct.

4.3 September 1978 Differences

As with August microzooplankton data, the first two functions from September data accounted for over 97% of the variance and the third function was still significant $(p = 0.0474)$. However, in September only three taxa were retained in the analysis (Table 7). Highest coefficients in the first two functions were those for barnacle nauplii and Acartia tonsa copepodids, respectively. Distribution of stations along the first function (Fig. 7, September) coincides with an increase in barnacle larvae toward the discharge station BOl and an increase in A . tonsa copepodids are reflected in positioning of stations along the second function.

As in August, differences between stations A08 and BOl and between BOl and C30 are less than those evident between station 032 and other stations. All replicates, however, were correctly classified into stations.

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 $* - p \le 0.05$

 $** - p \le 0.01$

5. MESO- AND MACROZOOPLANKTON

Collections made with 18.5 cm bongo nets of 202 μ m mesh, the mesh size recommended for division between micro- and mesozooplankton (BMPCO, 1969), provided the principal source of information on composition, abundance and structure of the zooplankton community in this study. These collections were utilized for measures of biomass, sample and species similarity, and diversity.

5.1 Biomass

A relatively rough, but non-destructive., method for estimating zooplankton biomass was used in this preliminary study: displacement volume of total preserved collections. Volume is a poor measurement of biomass (1) in the presence of large numbers of coelenterates or ctenophores, and (2) where net meshes become clogged in heavy blooms of phytoplankton or heavy loads of detritus. Jellyfishes and ctenophores were absent in the low salinities of the study area in the summer of 1978, so the first disadvantage of the method can be discounted. The second problem with the method probably contributed to some of the wide differences in results listed in Table 8. One consistency in tabulated results from month to month is the low biomass at intake stations compared with stations downstream from the plant's discharge. A $2.5 - 4$ -fold increase occurred from the intake (station A08) to the immediate discharge (B01). Even larger

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estimates were evident at stations farther downstream in July and August.

Increases in detritus can be expected in power plant discharges as a result of thermal and mechanical damage to entrained organisms and from an increase in turbulence and sediment stirring. Similarly, downstream production of phytoplankton increases in direct response to temperature elevation. Thus, the above-mentioned second problem with displacement volume as a measure of biomass could be expected to apply in the study area, and in the manner shown by our data. It should be noted that use of the more tedious, destructive method of lyophilizing for dry weight does not overcome this problem of phytoplankton and detritus addition, which is a function of the net mesh size employed and local abundance of suspended organic matter.

Macrozooplankton net collections were always sparse and unrepresentative of zooplankton populations due to the large mesh size (505 μ m) through which, in estuaries, most of the dominant species escape.

5.2 Species Occurrence, Dominance and Relative Abundance

A checklist of the zooplankton identified from 18.5 cm bongo and $1/2$ meter nets is in the Appendix to this report (Table A-3). Acartia tonsa, Argulus alosae, barnacle larvae and the larvae of

the mud crab Rhithropanopeus harrisii occurred at all sampled stations (36). The cyclopoid parasite of catfishes, Ergasilus cerastes, was found at 35 stations. Other frequent species included the cladocerans Moina micrura, at all July and August stations but decreasing in frequency in September, and Leptodora kindtii, at every station in July but rare after that. Eurytemora affinis occurred at 80% of sampled stations. Also common were water mites (Acarina), cladocerans Diaphanosoma sp. and species of the family Chydoridae, and Palaemonetes sp. larvae in July and August.

Three of the common species were particularly abundant over the study area, as listed in Table 9, where calculated densities are averaged over the 12 stations sampled each month: Moina micrura, $1644/m^3$ in July, declining rapidly to near-absence in September; Acartia tonsa declining through the summer from 855 to $395/m³$; and barnacle larvae with an August maximum of $242/m³$.

A quick assessment of environmental differences in habitat among stations in a study area can often be gained by identifying the species that numerically dominate the collections. Dominants from C. P. Crane waters are listed in Table 10. In each month a pair of taxa shared dominance of all 12 stations, a display of high similarity of the area's fauna. Seasonally, Moina micrura relinquished its dominant role to the increased numbers of barnacle larvae in August. Changes from station to station

Table 9. Frequency of occurrence (%) and average abundance (total numbers per total sampled volume in m^3) of the more common zooplankton species occurring near the C. P. Crane generating station, summer 1978. Based on collections made with 18.5 cm bongo samplers $(202 \mu m$ mesh nets).

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Table 10. Rank of numerical dominance of zooplankton species in 18.5 cm bongo, 202 μ m mesh nets. Stations listed in order of approach to, and distance from, the C. P. Crane power plant. Designations 1, 2, 3 represent first, second and third most ahundant species in individual collections.

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appeared coincident to plant location in July with a shift in primary dominance from Acartia tonsa to Moina micrura and in August and September with the emergence of barnacle larvae as the most abundant taxon. Eurytemora affinis ranked as a tertiary dominant only at stations on the discharge side of the plant.

5.3 Community Analysis

5.3.1 Cluster and Nodal Analyses

The normal cluster analysis of July 1978 small bongo collections reflected the close similarity of fauna evident in the above examination of species dominance. All twelve collections were linked at a relatively high level of similarity (Fig. 8). Clustering of species (inverse analysis) was mostly according to relative abundance, with the two primary dominants, Acartia tonsa and Moina micrura, occurring as species group B. Fidelity indices were all at or close to unity, showing a general lack of "preference" or "avoidance" by any particular species group for any of the station clusters. All four station clusters had a fidelity index of 1.0 in the case of species group B. Only the least abundant group of species (D) exhibited a moderate range of fidelity for station groups $(0.4 - 1.2)$.

The station clusters designated $I - IV$ have little informational content .in that groups I and III include mixtures of geographically distant stations, an upper Saltpeter Creek station

Fig. 8 Station and species clusters from July 1978 18.5 em bongo collections, with the relationship of species clusters to station clusters shown by indices of fidelity.

with one from the lower Gunpowder River, and two near-discharge stations with one at the mouth of the intake creek. This is further indication of the overall, close similarity of the 12 stations.

In summary, except for an upper tier of slightly lower salinity stations (Group IV, stations B40, C04, C30, D20 and D32) for which some preference was shown by the less abundant, freshwater species group D, the cluster and nodal analyses in July showed a general close similarity among all localities in the study area.

August 1978 collections were again closely similar (all 12 stations linked at a similarity of > 0.6 , Fig. 9). The inverse analysis of species again linked the two primary dominants, in this case Acartia tonsa and barnacle larvae, as a single species group (C). As in July, fideiity indices for the dominant species equaled 1.0 throughout the station groups. The subdominants (species group B) also showed a general lack of preference for any particular cluster of stations.

Species characteristic of fresher waters were, in August, divided into two groups (A and D) which, in terms of fidelity, differed primarily in their occurrence in station groups I, II and IV. Species group A, including Eucyclops agilis and Diaphanosoma sp., was absent in the immediate discharge while showing a slight preference (fidelity = 1.1) for lower stations in Seneca Creek and

Fig. 9 Station and species clusters from August 1978 18.5 em bongo collections, with the relationship of species clusters to station clusters shown by indices of fidelity.

Gunpowder River (station group I). Species group D, including Palaemonetes sp. larvae and chydorid cladocerans, showed greater preference for the immediate discharge and station group IV (stations B16, C30).

However, as in July, differences among stations in August were too slight to produce distinctive and meaningful clusters.

One station group in September (group IV, consisting of stations B40, C04, C30 and D20), the upper tier of lower salinity locations, remained distinct from other stations to a similarity level below 0.5. Its distinctiveness was due primarily to the moderately high fidelity shown for those stations·by species groups B and E (Fig. 10). Both the dominants, Acartia tonsa and barnacle larvae, and the subdominants (species group D), were as likely to occur in one station cluster as another (all indices of fidelity equal to unity).

September data provided the first evidence of a distinctive cluster of stations among the set of 12 regularly sampled locations, with the final linking of all collections occurring at a similarity level just below 0.5 . The distinctive cluster (station group IV) was similar to the cluster of July 1978 data that also showed some preference by freshwater species. It would appear that this is the primary ecological division that can be expected among collections taken at the C. P. Crane site, i.e. low salinity vs. fresh water communities of zooplankton. It follows

Fig. 10 Station and species clusters from September 1978 18.5 em bongo collections, with the relationship of species clusters to station clusters shown by indices of fidelity.

that plant effect consists of displacement of the freshwater community, which during our abbreviated study, was maximal during August, intermediate in July when some preference of freshwater species for the upper tier of stations could be seen, and minimal in September when the cluster of lower salinity stations became distinct.

5.3.2 Diversity

The Shannon-Wiener index of diversity (H'), evenness (J') and Margalef's index of species richness (d) were calculated for each collection and are listed in Table 11. In general, diversity was low, with the highest $H' = 2.2801$ recorded at station A36 (mouth of Seneca Creek) in July. Diversity indices below 1.65 accounted for 90% of the observations. Evenness (J') estimates were below 0.5 in all collections but one, showing that numerical dominance of one or a few taxa contributed to low diversity. Species richness was also low, with none of the indices reaching 2.0.

In previous studies of continental shelf waters Grant (1978) found a useful correspondence between the relationship of Shannon-Wiener and species richness indices to ecological groups of stations derived from cluster analysis. In Fig. 11, it is evident that this correspondence occurred at the C. P. Crane site only in September when the upper tier of stations D40, C04, C30 and 020 were set off from other stations of generally lower

Table 11. Diversity (H') evenness (J') and species richness (d) of 18.5 cm bongo collections (202 μ m mesh nets) at the C. P. Crane generating station, July - September 1978. Stations designated A: Seneca Creek, intake; B: Saltpeter Creek, near discharge; C: lower Saltpeter Creek, far-field discharge; D; lower Gunpowder River.

Fig. 11 Relationship of diversity (H') to species richness (d) as calculated from 18.5 em bongo·collections, July- September 1978. Distinctiveness of station group IV from other stations in September is indicated by a line representing the 0.5 similarity level obtained in the cluster analysis (cf. Fig. 10).

diversity and species richness. In July and August, stations of the most distinct clusters (at higher levels of similarity) were intermingled with other stations on these bivariate plots.

6. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The principal physical effects of the c. P. Crane generating station include the transfer of relatively large volumes of oligohaline water into a shallow system of even fresher water and the elevation of temperatures in the receiving body of water. The horizontal extent of these changes depends on whether the plant is operating at partial or full capacity, on fresh water runoff from watersheds of Saltpeter Creek, Dundee Creek and Gunpowder River, and on tidal exchange.

Our limited data on temperature and salinity, observed only ancillary to biological sampling, show that a small range of salinity occurs in the area even in summer, when salinity is typically at a maximum. However, the range includes the juncture of fresh and brackish water where small changes are often critical to animals of both fresh and estuarine systems. Temperature effects could favor certain species in winter, accelerate reproductive and developmental rates in spring, and increase mortality in summer when ambient temperatures are already close to upper lethal limits for many species.

Apparent effects on plankton populations observed during the

summer of 1978 are divided below into small- and large-scale effects.

6.1 Apparent Small-scale Effects of Thermal Discharge

(1) Elevation of temperatures in immediate discharge area to above lethal limits for most zooplankton $($ $>$ 38 $^{\circ}$ C). Occurred in our August sampling, but only at station B01 •.

(2) Decrease in phytoplankton biomass. Minimum measures of chlorophyll were obtained at the discharge in July and August. In September biomass was low throughout the intake and discharge creeks.

(3) Sharp decrease in productivity at the immediate discharge. Occurred in both July and August.

(4) Absence of Diaphanosoma sp., a cladoceran, in discharge waters in July.

6.2 Possible Large-scale Effects

(1) Natural, pre-operational state of the environment in Saltpeter Creek was likely more nearly fresh than at present, with a more diverse fauna consisting of numerous eladocerans, aquatic insects and cyclopoid copepods similar to those evident in upper stations in September 1978.

(2) Present summer fauna is atypically structured, with 2 of the 5 common copepods parasitic on fishes. Decapod larvae were limited to two species, only those of Rhithropanopeus harrisii occurring in abundance. The altered environment may have selected

for these species. R. harrisii larvae can be expected to have highest survival in relatively low salinity and high temperature (Costlow, Bookhout and Monroe, 1966). Elevation of temperatures near the plant could therefore favor this species, especially when combined with a maintenance of salinity above 1.0 °/oo where Costlow et al. (1966) found high mortality of larvae at all temperatures. Eucyclops agilis has been reported as a eurythermal species (Rylov, 1948) and as the commonest littoral cyclopoid copepod in North America (Yeatman, 1959), so is probably limited mostly by the distribution of fresh water in the present site. There is no available information on temperature and salinity requirements of the copepod parasites of fishes, Argulus alosae and Ergasilus cerastes, the latter described from specimens collected from catfish at a Washington, D. C. fish market (Roberts, 1969).

(3) Increase in temperature from the plant's operation becomes large-scale in periods of higher ambient temperature (coinciding with higher demand for electric power), at which time temperature elevation is evident throughout Saltpeter Creek and the lower Gunpowder River (see also Binkerd et al., 1978).

(4) When discharge waters at the immediate discharge in summer cool below temperatures that may be inhibitory to photosynthesis $($ $>$ 38°C in August), the warmed waters may increase productivity through wide areas of the lower Saltpeter Creek and

lower Gunpowder River. Maximum productivity was recorded in all three months in lower Gunpowder River stations.

(5) The plant augments natural populations of barnacle larvae, which are then distributed throughout the system. These larvae, mostly nauplii, assumed dominance of zooplankton populations on the discharge side of the plant in both August and September.

6.3 Recommendations for Further Studies by the Power Plant Siting Program

(1) Extension of studies on phytoplankton and zooplankton through all seasons of the year.

(2) Addition of measurements of at least one primary nutrient, e.g. phosphorus, to phytoplankton studies, and of continuous measurements for temperature, salinity and incident light.

(3) Addition of close-spaced stations extending from the plant discharge to help delineate small-scale effects of the plant.

 (4) Substitution of additional microzooplankton stations for replicate samples taken in summer 1978.

(5) Relocation and extension of zooplankton 18.5 em bongo sample stations along transects through Seneca Creek, Saltpeter and Dundee creeks, Gunpowder River and out into the Chesapeake Bay proper, to aid in defining large-scale effects of the plant.

(6) Investigate temperature and salinity requirements for species such as Ergasilus cerastes and Argulus alosae, for which such information is lacking.

(7) Investigate food habits .and parasitology of local juvenile and adult fishes.

Acknowledgments

We thank Cathy J. Womack and Bruce A. Keafer for their assistance in both field and laboratory, Patricia A. Crewe, Roberta Wallace and Cathy Meyer for their careful sorting of collections, Burton B. Bryan for aid in the identification of freshwater cladocerans, David Zwerner for identification of Ergasilus cerastes and James E. Price for computer assistance. The general support of Paul L. Zubkoff in laboratory analyses of phytoplankton was most helpful. This work was fully supported by the Maryland Power Plant Siting Program.

Drafts and final copy of this report were prepared by the VIMS Report Center.

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Table A-2. Identity and counts (per 0.1 m³) of microzooplankton sampled by pump at the C. P. Crane generating station, July - September 1978.

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