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Parasites of Notothenia coriiceps: preliminary results of studies on the Vernadsky research station, Antarctica, in 2014–2015

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The Antarctic cod Notothenia coriiceps is the most abundant fish species in the waters around Antarctic and plays an important role in completing the life cycles of several parasites. The aim of our study was to update the information on parasites of N. coriiceps at the shore of Argentine Islands, Antarctica.

The study was carried out in 2014–2015 at the Vernadsky Station area during the 19th Ukrainian Antarctic expedition. Totally, 106 N. coriiceps specimens were dissected; more than 8,300 specimens of parasites and 7,900 cysts were collected. All fishes were infected with helminthes. Nematodes (n=1,438) were the most prevalent; they were found in 97.2% of fish with intensity 13.9±9.4 (SD). Trematodes (n=3,221) were found in 94.3% of fish; intensity 32.2±28.2. Acanthocephalans (n=2,506) were found in 93.4% of fish; intensity 25.3±21.3. Cestodes (n=762) were found in 62.3% of fish; intensity 9.1±9.9. Ectoparasites (n=390) were observed in 55.7% of fish. Leeches (Hirudinea) were found in 43.4% of fish; intensity 3.2±3.1. Monogenea were found in 32.1% of fish; intensity 5.6±7.6. Copepoda were observed in 4.7% of fish; intensity 1.2±0.4. Cysts (n=7,935) contained parasites were observed on the intestine wall and liver of all fishes with intensity from 6 to 270. Comparison of our data with results of previous studies of N. coriiceps in Antarctic waters revealed increasing of the prevalence and intensity of fish infection with Nematoda and decreasing of the prevalence of Cestoda; the level of fish infection (prevalence and intensity) with others groups of parasites does not significantly changed.