# The importance of macrophyte bed size for cladoceran composition and horizontal migration in a shallow lake

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Abstract. Cladoceran composition and diel horizontal migration were studied in 2,10 and 25 m diameter macrophyte exclosures established in the littoral zone of shallow Lake Stigsholm, Denmark. The exclosures were protected from waterfowl grazing, but open to fish. The macrophyte community comprised Potamogeton pectinatus, Potamogeton pusillus and Callitriche hermaphroditica. Cladocerans were sampled randomly every third hour inside and outside the macrophyte exclosures during a 24 h period. In the 2 m exclosure, the pelagic species Ceriodaphnia spp. and Bosmina spp. dominated during the day, mean density being as high as 3430 indiv. 1-1. During the night, density decreased to 10-20% of the daytime density, thus indicating diel horizontal migration. In the 10 and 25 m exclosures, the daytime mean density of Ceriodaphnia spp. was 865 and 202 indiv. 1-1, respectively, and did not decrease at night. In contrast to the pelagic species, the density of macrophyte-associated species tended to be higher in the 10 and 25 m exclosure than in the 2 m exclosure. In the daytime, Eurycercus lamellatus density in the 2, 10 and 25 m macrophyte exclosures was 7, 28 and 16 indiv. 1-1, respectively, while that of Simocephalus vetulus was 11, 171 and 92 indiv. 1-1, respectively. There was no day-night difference in the density of macrophyte-associated species. We conclude that cladoceran community composition varies with macrophyte bed size, and that the edge zone between the bed and open water is an important daytime refuge for potentially migrating pelagic cladocerans.

#### Introduction

Submerged macrophytes can have an important stabilizing effect on the clear-water stage in eutrophic freshwater lakes (Moss, 1990; Scheffer, 1990; Jeppesen et al., 1991). One of the reasons is that the macrophyte beds act as a spatial daytime refuge for cladocerans (Timms and Moss, 1984; Davies, 1985; Lauridsen and Buenk, 1996; Lauridsen and Lodge, 1996), thereby enabling the zooplankton to survive despite the presence of fish, and hence maintain a high grazing pressure on the phytoplankton.

In many eutrophic lakes, however, submerged vegetation is lacking due to the low transparency. Attempts to restore macrophytes by reducing external nutrient loading are often thwarted by resilience caused by internal nutrient loading or biological resistance (Ryding, 1981; Sas, 1989; Jeppesen et al., 1991). One approach used to reduce the recovery period is fish manipulation (Gulati et al., 1990; Jeppesen et al., 1990), a measure that in some lakes has led to the reappearance of submerged macrophytes within 1 or 2 years (Ozimek et al., 1990; Van Donk et al., 1990; Hanson and Butler, 1994; Meijer et al., 1994). In other cases, however, the response time has been longer (Lauridsen et al., 1993), the delay being attributable to factors such as a lack of seeds or other propagules, resistance related to sediment composition (Barko and Smart, 1986) and waterfowl grazing (Lauridsen et al., 1993; Søndergaard et al., 1996). In such cases, it would be relevant to promote macrophyte growth actively, for instance by improving conditions for a sparse natural stand, e.g. by fencing in the potential growth areas or by transplantation.

Such measures may also have implications for the survival of cladocerans seeking refuge in the plant beds. The findings of Lauridsen and Buenk (1996) indicate that the boundary zone between macrophyte beds and the open water is particularly important as a refuge for cladocerans. This suggests that a high macrophyte bed edge: area ratio would favour migrating cladocerans, while a low edge: area ratio would favour the non-migrating littoral species that usually dominate in macrophyte-covered shallow areas (e.g. Quade, 1969; DiFonzo and Campbell, 1988; Paterson, 1993). In the present study, we have therefore evaluated how macrophyte bed size affects the composition and diel migration of a number of pelagic and littoral cladoceran species.

## Study area

The study was undertaken in shallow eutrophic Lake Stigsholm situated in central Jutland, Denmark. The lake area is 21 ha and it has a maximum and mean depth of 1.2 and 0.8 m, respectively. In the period 1988–1992, average summer (May–October) total phosphorus (P) ranged from 105 to 151 µg P l<sup>-1</sup>. The vegetation was dominated by submerged macrophytes until the 1950s, but has since been alternately dominated by macrophytes and phytoplankton. At the time of the study, the fish stock was dominated by roach (*Rutilus rutilus* L.) and perch (*Perca fluviatilis* L.), which comprised 79 and 18%, respectively, of the total number of fish caught in multiple mesh size survey nets (Schriver *et al.*, 1995).

#### Method

The study was conducted in August 1992 as part of a larger project. Triplicate circular macrophyte exclosures with diameters of 2, 10 and 25m, respectively, were established ~15 m from the shore in the littoral region of the lake bed. However, the macrophyte development in the exclosures deviated substantially among the replicates. Since the importance of macrophytes as a refuge for cladocerans is highly dependent on the per cent plant volume infested (PVI) (Schriver et al., 1995; Jeppesen et al., 1996), we decided to concentrate this study on three exclosures (one of each diameter) with identical and high PVI (60–70%).

Water depth in each of the three exclosures ranged from ~0.6 to 0.9 m. The exclosure fencing consisted of 60 mm mesh polyethylene netting projecting 1.6 m above the sediment surface, thereby preventing the macrophytes from being grazed by the lake waterfowl [mainly coot (Fulica atra L.) and mute swan (Cygnus olor Gmelin)] and large fish, but leaving the exclosures open to lake water and sediment. The macrophytes in the exclosures were left to grow naturally. A 10–20 m wide macrophyte-free zone was cleared around the exclosures to create a sharp demarcation between the macrophyte beds and the open water. The dominant macrophytes present were Potamogeton pectinatus L., Potamogeton pusillus L. and Callitriche hermaphroditica L. Macrophyte coverage, height and water depth were measured 1 week before the study at 5, 10 or 25 locations equidistant along the diameter of the three exclosures, the number depending on exclosure size. Macrophyte density was expressed as PVI (Canfield et al., 1984) calculated

as the product of per cent coverage and height divided by the water depth. The macrophyte beds and the adjacent open-water reference areas were sampled every 3 h during a 24 h period using a core sampler (diameter 7.2 cm) to collect an entire water column. The method only allows sampling of animals inhabiting the water between the macrophytes together with individuals shaken off the plants during sample collection. The number of macrophyte-associated species is therefore likely to be underestimated. Samples for cladoceran enumeration were collected randomly at four locations within each macrophyte bed and at three open-water reference stations located 5–10 m from each exclosure. The composite exclosure and reference samples (6–121) were filtered through an 80  $\mu$ m mesh net and fixed in acid Lugol's solution. Cladocerans >140  $\mu$ m were determined to genus or species level and counted using a stereomicroscope. Dense samples were subsampled, but at least 100 individuals of the dominant species were counted. A zooplankton sample was also taken in the open water of the central part of the lake on 11 August in connection with routine lake sampling.

Because of the lack of replicates, we tested horizontal migration from the macrophyte beds by comparing day data (mean density at 11 a.m., 2 p.m.and 5 p.m.) with night data (8 p.m., 11 p.m. and 1 a.m.) using Student's *t*-test. Eight p.m. was included as 'night' because zooplankton densities generally resembled night more than day at that time (Figure 1). Such a test can only give a rough estimate of the difference, as the triplicate samples cannot be assumed to be mutually independent. However, the reference samples are true replicates. Student's *t*-test was also used when testing for differences in cladoceran density between macrophyte-covered and open areas.

### Results

Macrophyte composition was identical in the three exclosures, with *C.herma-phroditica* covering the bottom, and PVI being mainly accounted for by *P.pectinatus* and *P.pusillus*. PVI in the 2, 10 and 25 m macrophyte exclosures was 70, 60 and 61%, respectively.

As the diameter of the macrophyte exclosures increased, daytime cladoceran mean density decreased: from 5527 indiv. I<sup>-1</sup> in the 2 m exclosure to 1864 indiv. I<sup>-1</sup> in the 10 m exclosure, and 894 indiv. I<sup>-1</sup> in the 25 m exclosure (Table I). This was mainly attributable to a marked decrease in the number of *Ceriodaphnia* spp. and *Bosmina* spp. with increasing macrophyte exclosure size (Table I, Figure 1). Most other cladocerans in fact increased in density, but as they were only present in small numbers, this could not compensate for the decrease in the two dominant species (Table I, Figure 1). Total cladoceran daytime mean density at the reference and mid-lake stations was 243 and 121 indiv. I<sup>-1</sup>, respectively, *Ceriodaphnia* spp. and *Bosmina* spp. being completely dominant (Table I).

Ceriodaphnia spp. and Bosmina spp. accounted for 96% of total cladoceran numbers in the 2 m macrophyte exclosure, 62% in the 10 m exclosure and 26% in the 25 m exclosure (Table I). The corresponding figures for the reference and midlake stations were 89 and 94%, respectively. Diaphanosoma brachyurum accounted for 4% of the mid-lake population, 1% of the total cladoceran numbers

**Table I.** Cladoceran daytime mean densities ( $\pm 95\%$  CL) and percentage of total cladoceran numbers in macrophyte exclosures of diameter 2, 10 and 25 m (n = 3), at the open-water reference stations (all sampled 5–6 August; n = 9) and at the mid-lake station (sampled 11 August; n = 1)

	2m exclosure		10 m exclosure		25 m exclosure		Reference stations		Mid-lake	
	No. l <sup>-1</sup>	%	No. 1-1	%	No. I <sup>-1</sup>	%	No. 1-1	%	No. 1 <sup>-1</sup>	%
Ceriodaphnia spp.	3430	62	865	46	202	23	99 ± 38	41 ± 16	92	76
Bosmina spp.	1876	34	300	16	28	3	$118 \pm 45$	$48 \pm 18$	22	18
Diaphanosoma brachyurum	70	1	278	15	138	15	$3 \pm 1$	$1 \pm 0.3$	5	4
Sida crystallina	1	0	10	0.5	10	1	$0.1 \pm 0.1$	$0 \pm 0$	0	0
Eurycercus lamellatus	7	0.1	28	1.5	16	2	$0.1 \pm 0.1$	$0 \pm 0$	0	0
Simocephalus vetulus	11	0.2	171	9	92	11	$0 \pm 0$	$0 \pm 0$	0	0
Pleuroxus sp.	109	2	72	4	82	9	$16 \pm 13$	$7 \pm 5$	0	0
Chydorus sphaericus	23	0.4	140	8	325	36	$7 \pm 4$	$3\pm2$	2	2
Total no. I <sup>-1</sup>	5527	100	1864	100	893	100	243	100	121	100

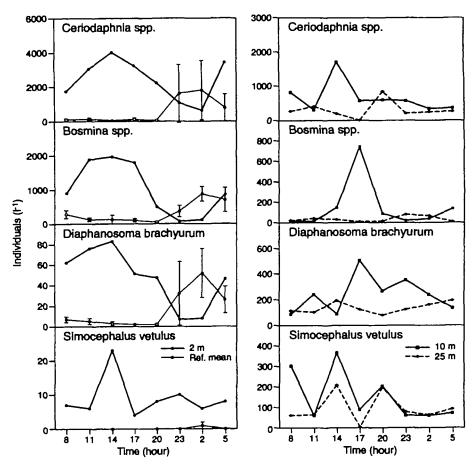


Fig. 1. Cladoceran density in macrophyte exclosures of three sizes during a 24 h period (5–6 August). Left panel: 2 m diameter exclosure (•), reference station mean value ± 95% CL (o). Right panel: 10 m diameter exclosure (•) and 25 m diameter exclosure (•).

in the 2 m exclosure, and 15% in the 10 and 25 m exclosures. The percentage of the macrophyte-associated species *Sida crystallina*, *Eurycercus lamellatus* and *Simocephalus vetulus* increased with size, comprising 0.3, 11 and 14% of the total cladoceran numbers in the 2, 10 and 25 m exclosures, respectively (Table I).

Daytime mean densities of *Ceriodaphnia* spp. and *Bosmina* spp. in the 2 m exclosure were significantly (P = 0.0078 and P = 0.00008) higher (340 and 1876 indiv.  $I^{-1}$ , respectively) than in the reference area (99 and 118 indiv.  $I^{-1}$ , respectively) and at the mid-lake station (92 and 22 indiv.  $I^{-1}$ , respectively) (Table I and Figure 2). At night, no difference was found, density being ~1000 and 300 indiv.  $I^{-1}$ , respectively (Figure 2). In the 10 m macrophyte exclosure, both *Bosmina* spp. and *Ceriodaphnia* spp. density did not differ from that at the reference stations, either during the day or during the night. However, in the 25 m macrophyte exclosure, *Bosmina* spp. density was lower during the day (P = 0.035) than at the

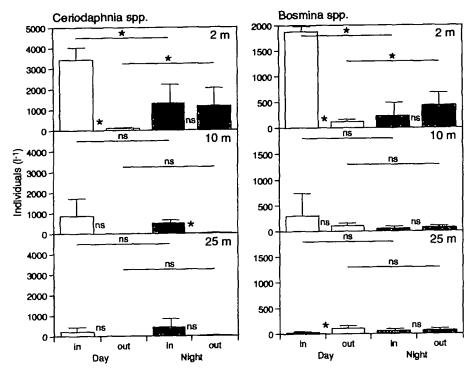


Fig. 2. Mean daytime and night-time density of *Ceriodaphnia* spp. and *Bosmina* spp. inside and outside macrophyte exclosures of diameter 2, 10 and 25 m. Statistically significant differences are indicated by an asterisk (see the text for P values; ns, not significant). The vertical bars indicate 95% CL (n = 3-9).

reference stations. Moreover, the daytime density of *Ceriodaphnia* spp. was significantly higher in the 2 m macrophyte exclosure (3430 indiv.  $l^{-1}$ ) than in the 10 m (P = 0.008) and the 25 m (P = 0.0002) macrophyte exclosures (865 and 202 indiv.  $l^{-1}$ , respectively) (Table I and Figure 2). No consistent pattern was found for *D.brachyurum*. The density was significantly higher during the day than at night in the 2 m macrophyte exclosure (P = 0.04). During the night, a significantly higher density was found in the 10 and 25 m macrophyte exclosures than at the reference stations, while no differences were found between the 2 m macrophyte exclosure and the reference stations, except during the day (P = 0.02). There was a tendency towards higher densities in the 10 and 25 m exclosures than in the 2 m exclosure: 278 and 138 indiv.  $l^{-1}$ , respectively, versus 70 indiv.  $l^{-1}$  (Table I, Figure 3). At the mid-lake station, the density was only 5 indiv.  $l^{-1}$ .

Sida crystallina daytime density was <1 indiv.  $l^{-1}$  both inside and outside the 2 m exclosure, whereas in the 10 and 25 m exclosures it was 10 indiv.  $l^{-1}$  and substantially greater (P = 0.003 and 0.04, respectively) than at the reference stations (Table I, Figure 3). During the night, no significant difference was found in the density between the macrophyte beds and the reference stations. Neither was any significant day-night difference in *D.brachyurum* and *S.crystallina* density found

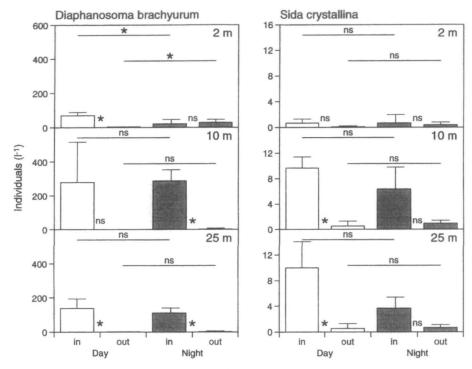


Fig. 3. Mean daytime and night-time density of *Diaphanosoma brachyurum* and *Sida crystallina* inside and outside macrophyte exclosures of diameter 2, 10 and 25 m. See Figure 2 for further information.

within the different macrophyte exclosures. However, the density of *S.crystallina* in the 10 and 25 m exclosures was significantly higher (P = 0.002, P = 0.022 and P = 0.035, P = 0.028) than in the 2 m exclosure during both the day and night (Table I and Figure 3). *Eurycercus lamellatus* was found in significantly higher densities in the 10 and 25 m exclosures than at the reference stations (Table I, Figure 4) during both the day and night, mean daytime density of *E.lamellatus* in the 2, 10 and 25 m exclosures being 7,28 and 16 indiv.  $1^{-1}$ , respectively. *Simocephalus vetulus* showed the same, although not as pronounced, tendency as *E.lamellatus*. The mean daytime density in 2, 10 and 25 m macrophyte exclosures was 11, 171 and 92 indiv.  $1^{-1}$ , respectively. Moreover, *E.lamellatus* and *S.vetulus* density was higher in the 10 and 25 m exclosures than in the 2 m exclosure, albeit only significant for *E. lamellatus*. For the two species, no day–night change was found. The density at the reference stations was <1 indiv.  $1^{-1}$  and both species were absent at the mid-lake station.

Pleuroxus spp. and Chydorus sphaericus showed the same diel pattern as E.lamellatus and S.vetulus, the density of both being higher inside the macrophyte exclosures irrespective of exclosure size and time of sampling (Figure 5). Only during the night were significant variations found in the mean density between the macrophyte beds and the reference stations. Mean density in the macrophyte beds tended to be less at night than during the day, but the difference was not

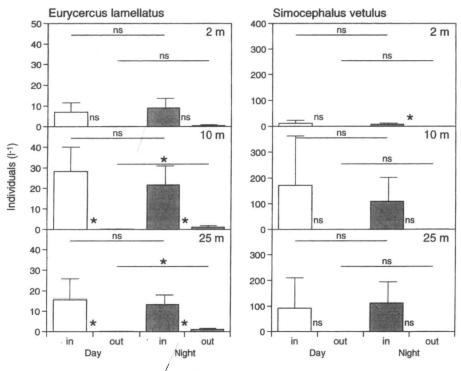


Fig. 4. Mean daytime and night-time density of Eurycerus lamellatus and Simocephalus vetulus inside and outside macrophyte exclosures of diameter 2, 10 and 25 m. See Figure 2 for further information.

significant. At the reference and mid-lake stations, no consistent day-night pattern was found and the daytime density of *Pleuroxus* spp. and *C.sphaericus* at the mid-lake station was 0 and 2 indiv. l<sup>-1</sup>, respectively. *Pleuroxus* spp. and *C.sphaericus* density did not differ significantly between the various exclosure sizes.

#### Discussion

The present study suggests that the macrophyte bed cladoceran community changes in composition depending on bed size. Thus, pelagic and horizontally migrating species dominated in the small macrophyte bed, and littoral non-migrating species in the larger beds. Moreover, diel horizontal migration to and from open water was greatest in the case of a small macrophyte bed.

A reservation about our study, though, is the lack of replicates of the macrophyte bed size because of the accidental, large difference in development of macrophytes within triplicate exclosures. There are nevertheless two good reasons for believing that the conclusion drawn about the impact of macrophyte bed size on cladoceran community composition and diel migration is valid. Firstly, a recent study in the same lake revealed little inter-bed variation in triplicate 5 m macrophyte exclosures, e.g. SE on total abundance for the different species included in

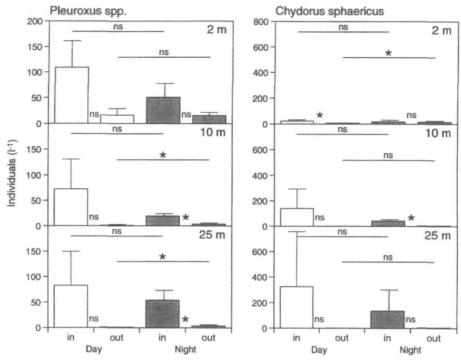


Fig. 5. Mean daytime and night-time density of *Pleuroxus* spp. and *Chydorus sphaericus* inside and outside macrophyte exclosures of diameter 2, 10 and 25 m. See Figure 2 for further information.

the present study averaged 24% (E.Jeppesen, unpublished data), which is substantially lower than the major inter-bed and diel density variations found in the present study for several of the species. Secondly, the 95% CL was low for our reference stations.

Ceriodaphnia spp. and Bosmina spp. were both found in very high concentrations in the small macrophyte bed during the day, at which time they totally dominated the cladoceran community. The density of these two species was much less in the larger macrophyte beds, albeit greater than at the reference and the midlake stations. At night, the density of both Bosmina and Ceriodaphnia in the small bed decreased to ~10-20% of the daytime level, and there was a corresponding increase at the reference stations, thus suggesting that both species undergo diel horizontal migration between the macrophyte-covered area and open water. An increase in night-time density of Bosmina in open littoral areas has also been reported by DiFonzo and Campbell (1988). Ceriodaphnia spp. and Bosmina spp. are often found in the pelagic (Lair, 1991; Vuille, 1991; Bast and Seitz, 1993; Paterson, 1993), especially when predation pressure by fish is high. Predation by 0+ fish was probably high in Lake Stigsholm, thus Daphnia spp. and Eudiaptomus graciloides, which were both present in high densities in late spring, disappeared almost completely in mid-June when 0+ fish appeared (L.Jensen, unpublished data), and the zooplankton community became dominated by small cladocerans,

cyclopoid copepods and rotifers (Søndergaard et al., 1993). Thus, the substantial diel horizontal migration seen with the 2 m exclosure probably reflects a reaction to high fish predation pressure (Lauridsen and Lodge, 1996).

Diaphanosoma brachyurum was abundant within the two larger macrophyte exclosures. Like Bosmina and Ceriodaphnia, D.brachyurum was observed to migrate from the 2 m exclosure to open water at night. This coincided with the fact that D.brachyurum is found in the pelagic zone in many lakes (Jarvis et al., 1987; Vuille, 1991) as well as in Lake Stigsholm (Table I).

Sida crystallina, E.lamellatus and S.vetulus were found to be closely associated with macrophytes, as has been reported by others (e.g. Quade, 1969; Fairchild, 1981; Lehtovaara and Sarvala, 1994; Paterson, 1994). All three species were present in low density in the small macrophyte exclosure and high density in the large exclosures, but were absent at the mid-lake station. Moreover, for E.lamellatus and S.vetulus there was no diel variation in density in either the macrophyte exclosures or at the reference stations, indicating that they do not migrate between macrophyte beds and open water. For S.crystallina, there was a tendency towards migration from the large macrophyte exclosures as significantly higher density was found in the exclosure than at the reference station during the day, but not during the night. However, there was not any day to night difference in density within the various macrophyte exclosures.

Our study also suggests that *Chydorus sphaericus* and *Pleuroxus* spp. in Lake Stigsholm were mainly macrophyte-associated, showing no diel horizontal migration, although the association is not as close as for *E.lamellatus* and *Simocephalus*. This corresponds well with the fact that *Pleuroxus* spp. is found in surface sediment (DiFonzo and Campbell, 1988) and that *C.sphaericus* occurs in the pelagic zone of many lakes (e.g. Boikova, 1986; Cryer and Townsend, 1988), including Lake Stigsholm (Table I).

Although we registered a major shift from dominance by pelagic species (Bosmina spp. and Ceriodaphnia spp.) in the small macrophyte exclosure to a higher contribution of macrophyte-associated species in the larger macrophyte exclosures, the density of pelagic species were nevertheless equal to or larger than that of the macrophyte-associated species even in the 25 m exclosures. This may be due to methodological underestimation of macrophyte-associated species. Thus, when comparing open-water samples taken among macrophytes, Vuille (1991) found that Scrystallina density was underestimated by a factor of 2-5 in relation to the density in a sample including macrophytes.

The present study thus suggests that per unit area, small-sized macrophyte beds are more important as a daytime refuge for horizontally migrating cladocerans than large-sized beds. This is in concert with the finding of Lauridsen and Buenk (1996) that Daphnia magna and Daphnia hyalina/galeata favour the edge zone between macrophytes and open water as a daytime refuge rather than the whole bed area. In a parallel study, Jeppesen et al. (in press) found that the daytime density in the beds and the migration intensity increased with increasing macrophyte density.

That night-time migration may markedly enhance the density of pelagic cladocerans, even when the macrophyte-covered area is small, can be illustrated by data from the 2 m exclosure. The reduction in density for *Bosmina* and *Ceriodaphnia* from day to night amounted to 1600 and 2500 l<sup>-1</sup>, respectively, which is ~35-fold higher than the concentration in mid-lake samples. This means that a 3% coverage of small, dense macrophyte beds (2 m in diameter, 60–70% PVI) may lead to a doubling of cladoceran density in open water during the night. Consequently, a large macrophyte-covered area is not a prerequisite for achieving a significant increase in zooplankton grazing capacity in open water at night.

The establishment of macrophyte refuges protected from waterfowl grazing has been proposed as a restoration measure to supplement loading reductions in shallow lakes (Moss, 1990; Jeppesen et al., 1991). The implication of the present study, therefore, is that establishing numerous small refuges should result in a much higher density of migrating cladocerans than establishing a single or few large refuges. This, in turn, will ensure a greater filtration capacity within the beds during the day and in the open water during the night. Per unit area, small and dense macrophyte refuges may be better able to promote a shift to a clearwater stage than larger ones with low macrophyte density.

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