

region,—though, probably owing to the influence of currents, forms like *Dorocidaris* and *Waldheimia septata* seem to find their most favourable conditions of existence there, and consequently are extremely abundant,—but because the plateau-edges are the limits of distribution between the fauna inhabiting the plateaus and the totally distinct fauna of the deep central basin of the Norwegian Sea known as the “cold area.” To avoid misunderstanding I may repeat that on the steep slope below the actual edge, and down to a depth of 600 or 800 metres, that is to say, to a depth where the temperature does not fall below 0° C., forms belonging to the boreal fauna may be met with. Still these slopes are as a rule so precipitous in comparison with the wide plateaus that, topographically, one is almost entitled to look upon the edges as a boundary region. The bottom of the slopes below the edge itself seems to consist nearly everywhere of soft mud dotted over with large-sized stones, thus providing a home for both mud-bottom forms and hard-bottom forms.

I have stated that we are still only imperfectly acquainted with the fauna on the bottom of sand and stones upon the plateaus, as only a few systematic investigations have been undertaken here and there. But we know enough to conclude that from a zoo-geographical point of view it is similar to that of the muddy bottom, consisting partly of forms that are common to both the plateaus and the fjords, and partly of forms peculiar to the plateaus which do not enter the fjords. The latter, however, like the corresponding forms of the muddy bottom, are comparatively few. This is confirmed by some dredgings made by the “Michael Sars” in 1906, when researches were carried out on several parts of the Norwegian plateau.

Fauna of the  
plateaus.

Without attempting a full description of the lower animal-forms on the plateaus, we may refer to a few of the principal ones. Several hauls by the “Michael Sars” with the trawl in 1902 and 1906 showed an abundance of animal life in the northern portion of the North Sea Plateau, on hard sandy bottom (probably mixed with small stones) at depths of 150 to 200 metres, belonging to both fjord forms as well as plateau forms:—

There were numbers of *Spatangus* (especially *S. raschi* in the greater depths), *Echinus acutus* forma *norvegicus*, and *Dorocidaris papillata*, forms characteristic of the edges, also considerable quantities of *Asterias rubens*, *Porania pulvillus*, *Goniaster borealis* (?), *Echinaster sanguinolentus*, *Pontaster tenuispinus*, *Stichaster roseus*, *Hippasterias phrygiana* (*plana*),