

Redescription of the milliped *Amphelictogon subterraneus bahamiensis* Chamberlin, 1918, with an assessment of the family Chelodesmidae in the Bahamas (Polydesmida: Leptodesmidea)

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Abstract

The milliped *Amphelictogon subterraneus bahamiensis* Chamberlin, 1918, the only representative of the family Chelodesmidae in the Bahamas and the only one in the New World occurring in part north of the Tropic of Cancer, is recorded from Eleuthera Island in addition to published localities from Andros and Cat Islands, Bahamas, and Cayo Coco, Cuba, where it is common. A redescription in English is provided along with gonopod drawings in medial and lateral views; a female cyphopod is illustrated for the first time. The populations on these three Bahamian islands probably represent isolated fragments of a once continuous population on the Pleistocene “super-island” on Great Bahama Bank, which in turn likely originated through rafting from the area of Cuba that now includes Cayo Coco. Investigations are needed to learn whether the species still survives on Andros, Eleuthera, and Cat islands, and whether additional populations occur on other islands that were once joined in the Pleistocene land mass.

Key words: Bahamas, Andros, Eleuthera, Cat Island, Cayo Coco, Great Bahama Bank, rafting, *Amphelictogon subterraneus bahamiensis*

Introduction

The polydesmidan milliped family Chelodesmidae comprises two subfamilies: the nominate, the dominant representative of the suborder Leptodesmidea in the Neotropics, which ranges from Guerrero and Veracruz, Mexico, to Argentina, and occupies the Greater Antilles, Tobago, and Trinidad (Hoffman 1978, 1980, 1999; Golovatch *et al.* 1999; Shelley 2002a); and the Prepodesminae, which inhabits sub-Saharan Africa from Guinea to Kenya and Angola with one species in northern Spain (Hoffman 1980, 1994). Two samples of the Chelodesminae have been taken in the Bahamas; both were described as new species in the Cuban genus *Amphelictogon* Chamberlin, 1918, and subsequently cited by Attems