

**Benthic ciliates from Sepetiba Bay (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)
with description of *Pseudokeronopsis sepetibensis* n. sp.
(Spirotrichea: Urostylida)**

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Abstract

During the period from 2001 to 2002, we examined samples of water and sediment from five stations in Sepetiba Bay, located in the south region of Rio de Janeiro state, Brazil. We identified 32 species of ciliate protists representing seven classes: Karyorelictea, Heterotrichea, Spirotrichea, Litostomatea, Phyllopharyngea, Protostomatea and Oligohymenophorea. Among the Spirotrichea, we discovered *Pseudokeronopsis sepetibensis* n. sp., characterized by a unique combination of three features: 3 contractile vacuoles, an inconspicuous mid-ventral row, and 4–5 frontoterminal cirri. It showed yellow-greenish coloration and elongated body outline (100–140µm x 20–26µm). On average, there were 44 adoral membranelles, 50 left marginal cirri, 48 right marginal cirri and 41 mid-ventral cirri disposed in a straight row past the level of the oral region. Other features include 4 frontoterminal cirri and a constant number of 3 transverse cirri; 8 frontal cirri (4 anterior and 4 posterior arranged as an atypical bicorone).

Key words: benthos, Brazil, ciliates, morphology, Rio de Janeiro

Introduction

The introduction of exotic species through the release of ballast water can produce disequilibrium in the aquatic macro and microfauna from harbor regions of many countries.

Until now, the diversity and composition of ciliates from Sepetiba Bay was unknown. From a list of ciliate species found in Sepetiba Bay during the period from 2001 to 2002, we present a detailed morphological study of a new Stichotricheous ciliate belonging to the genus *Pseudokeronopsis* Borror & Wicklow, 1983. This genus was included in family Pseudokeronopsidae Borror & Wicklow, 1983, along with genera *Thigmokeronopsis* Wicklow, 1981, *Keronella* Wiackowski, 1985, *Bicoronella* Foissner, 1995 and *Tricoro-*