A Nearctic tubificid *Varichaetadrilus harmani* (Loden) n. comb. in a Dutch wetland, with remarks on *Tubifex tubifex* (Müller) (Annelida: Oligochaeta)

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Abstract

Tubifex harmani Loden, 1979, was found in Europe (The Netherlands) for the first time and, after comparison with the type material, was transferred to the genus *Varichaetadrilus* Brinkhurst et Kathman, 1983. The definition of the genus is slightly amended. An externally similar phenotype of *Tubifex tubifex* (Müller, 1774) is described from a neighbouring site. The possible confusion of these two species elsewhere in Europe is discussed.

Key words: taxonomy, alien species, Oligochaeta, *Tasserkidrilus, Tubifex, Varichaetadrilus*, re-description, new combination

Introduction

Tubificid oligochaetes are common in fresh and brackish water bodies, particularly in those disturbed by man. Without particular knowledge, all tubificids are often regarded as indicators of the polluted state in water bodies (Rosenberg & Resh 1993). However, only large masses of the most tolerant tubificid species [e.g., *Tubifex tubifex* (Müller, 1774) and *Limnodrilus* spp.] are commonly associated with highly saprobic habitats, while the rest prefer cleaner environs. Even *T. tubifex*, a tubificid 'notorious' in the literature for its presence in aquatic systems heavily influenced by organic and chemical effluents, is also present in very clean lakes (Milbrink 1978). Morphologically, it is a "most typical" tubificid without any conspicuous external characters, and several, genetically different, cryptic species can have been misidentified as the nominal *T. tubifex*. There are subtle differences in body shape and chaetae, as well as in ecological tolerances, but no quantifiable or measurable differences in the reproductive system in representatives of *T. tubifex* collected from different water bodies (Poddubnaja & Timm 1980; Timm 1987,