



Maeridae, the *Elasmopus* group*

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* In: Lowry, J.K. & Myers, A.A. (Eds) (2009) Benthic Amphipoda (Crustacea: Peracarida) of the Great Barrier Reef, Australia. *Zootaxa*, 2260, 1–930.

Abstract

In the *Elasmopus* group of maerid amphipods, seven species of *Elasmopus*, six species of *Mallacoota* and two species of *Parelaelasmopus* are reported from the Great Barrier Reef, Queensland, Australia. Five of the 15 species, *Elasmopus slatyeri*, *Elasmopus varanocephalensis*, *Mallacoota capricornia*, *Mallacoota scopulosa* and *Parelaelasmopus cymatilis* are new to science. The Maeridae is diagnosed against all amphipod families and additional genera are assigned to the family.

Key words: Crustacea, Amphipoda, Maeridae, *Elasmopus* group, Great Barrier Reef, Australia, new species, taxonomy, *Elasmopus alalo*, *Elasmopus crenulatus*, *Elasmopus hooheno*, *Elasmopus pecteniscrus*, *Elasmopus slatyeri*, *Elasmopus spinicarpus*, *Elasmopus varanocephalensis*, *Mallacoota balara*, *Mallacoota capricornia*, *Mallacoota chandaniae*, *Mallacoota nananui*, *Mallacoota schellenbergi*, *Mallacoota scopulosa*, *Parelaelasmopus cymatilis*, *Parelaelasmopus suensis*

Introduction

The Maeridae Krapp-Schickel, 2008a, is distributed worldwide in shallow water marine and brackish habitats and more rarely in the deep sea. Maerid genera such as *Elasmopus* (89 species), *Ceradocus* (34 species), *Quadrimaera* (29 species), *Mallacoota* (21 species) and *Maera* (17 species) are very diverse in temperate and tropical environments.

Eleven genera and 33 species of maerids are reported from the Great Barrier Reef (Krapp-Schickel 2009; current study). The majority of species occur among the common genera *Elasmopus* (7 species), *Ceradocus* (6 species), *Mallacoota* (6 species) and *Quadrimaera* (4 species). Such a high species richness of Maeridae has not been reported from any other reef system. For example Ledoyer (1983) reported seven genera and 13 species from Madagascar reefs.

In this paper we report on the *Elasmopus* group which includes three genera and 15 species on the Great Barrier Reef of which five species are new to science.

Materials and methods

The descriptions were generated from a DELTA database (Dallwitz 2005) to the maerid species of the world. Material was hand-collected on scuba and is lodged in the Australian Museum, Sydney (AM) and the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin (NTM). A set of colour plates, a list of standard abbreviations and detailed station data is available in Lowry & Myers (2009). A CD (*Benthic Amphipoda (Crustacea: Peracarida) of the Great Barrier Reef: Interactive Keys*) is available with the book or the keys can be accessed at the crustacea.net website.