



First records of Pseudocerotidae (Platyhelminthes: Polycladida: Cotylea) from Patagonia, Argentina

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Abstract

In this work we record two species belonging to the polyclad family Pseudocerotidae from the littoral zone of the Península Valdés (Patagonia, Argentina). This is the first record of members of Cotylea and the third of Polycladida from Argentina. The two new records are *Phrikoceros mopsus*, a species described for Brazil and Colombia and *Thysanozoon brocchii*, a cosmopolitan species. Morphological features of both species are presented. These two new records contribute to the knowledge of polyclads from Patagonia and to the general understanding of their biogeography in the Southwest Atlantic Ocean.

Key words: Turbellaria, *Phrikoceros*, *Thysanozoon*, Península Valdés

Introduction

Polyclad flatworms are free living organisms that are most commonly found in the rocky intertidal zone and on coral reefs. Their distribution seems to be controlled by temperature and the highest diversity occurs in tropical regions (Prudhoe 1985). However, some species can be found in extreme habitats such as deep-sea environments (Quiroga *et al.* 2006, 2008) and in temperate regions. Along the Atlantic Coast of America, most species have been recorded from North America (Pearse 1938; Hyman 1940), the Caribbean Sea (Verrill 1900, 1901; Hyman 1939a–c, 1955a, b; Marcus & Marcus 1968; Quiroga *et al.* 2004; Bolaños *et al.* 2006, 2007), Brazil (Marcus 1947, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1954; du Bois Reymond Marcus 1955, 1957, 1958; Corrêa 1949, 1957; Hyman 1955c; Smith 1960; Bahia & Padula 2009), and Uruguay (Hyman 1955c; Bulnes *et al.* 2003). In Argentina, the only species collected so far are *Adenoplana platae* Hyman 1955, from the coast of Buenos Aires, and *Discoprosthides patagoniensis* Faubel 1983 from southern Patagonia.

Because polyclads have a simple body plan, very few morphological characters can be used for their taxonomy; most of these are related to their reproductive anatomy and to the arrangement of their eyes, tentacles, and pharynx. Members of the Pseudocerotidae are conspicuous because of their exuberant coloration; in fact, their color pattern has been considered a useful taxonomic character for specific identification (Newman & Cannon 1995, Litvaitis & Newman 2001).

We report herein for the first time two species of pseudocerotid polyclads collected in the intertidal zone of Patagonia, Argentina.