



A new species of Loxosomatidae (Entoprocta) from the Atlantic Ocean: *Loxosomella cubana* n. sp.

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Abstract

A new species of Entoprocta belonging to the genus *Loxosomella* is described: *L. cubana* n. sp. It has been found on the coast of Cuba living as an epizoite on the sponge *Aiolochoiria crassa*. It is one of the largest Loxosomatidae described up to now and the first record of an entoproct for Cuba.

Key words: Solitary entoproct, *Loxosomella cubana*, new species, sponge, *Aiolochoiria crassa*, Cuba

Introduction

The family Loxosomatidae includes all the solitary species of Entoprocta and is the most speciose family of the phylum. Up to now, 118 species of *Loxosomella* and 25 species of *Loxosoma* have been described (Nielsen 2010), but this number of species is not indicative of the real diversity of this group. Many species remain undescribed because many areas have not been studied. Particularly in Cuba, there are no studies at all on the entoprocts and they are very scarce in general in all the Western Atlantic (e.g. Nielsen 1966; Emschermann 2011) The small size of these organisms, their life habits on biotic or abiotic substrata, and their seasonality make difficult to study them.

Recent sampling directed to the study of marine invertebrates from the coast of Cuba showed the existence of an unknown loxosomatid inhabiting the surface and the channels of the sponge *Aiolochoiria crassa* (Hyatt). This new loxosomatid is described below.

Material and methods

Specimens were collected by scuba diving at 8 m depth in the Cuba National Aquarium (23°07'12" N, 82°25'74" W) (Havana, Cuba) on 15 April 2011. A sponge with numerous entoprocts was found on the rocky bottom of a coralline reef in the aquarium. The sponge was identified as *Aiolochoiria crassa* (Verongida: Aplysinidae). Sponge samples of approximately 2 cm² with loxosomatids were collected and transported in a jar with seawater to the laboratory where the material was photographed *in vivo*. Afterwards, the individuals were anesthetized with a 5% ethanol solution and subsequently fixed in formalin.

Systematics

Loxosomella cubana n. sp.

(Figs 1, 2; Table 1)

Material examined. *Holotype*: ANC. 06. 010 and *paratypes* ANC. 06.011, deposited in the Marine Natural Collec-