

## A new *Rakaia* species (Opiliones, Cyphophthalmi, Pettalidae) from Otago, New Zealand

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### Abstract

*Rakaia macra* sp. nov. is described from three lots of specimens collected by Ray Forster in 1977 from Waipori, Otago, South Island of New Zealand. This species is currently known only from the Waipori area (exact locality unspecified) where it is extremely abundant. Clearly a member of the family Pettalidae, *R. macra* sp. nov. presents unusual chelicerae, with a conspicuous outer lateral ridge on the second segment, and without the two types of denticles in the mobile digit that characterize the New Zealand pettalids. The relationships between the new species and its closest relatives are discussed, and the distinction between the genera *Rakaia* and *Neopurcellia* is questioned.

**Key words:** Opiliones, Cyphophthalmi, *Rakaia*, New Zealand

### Introduction

Cyphophthalmids are mostly small, inconspicuous, slow-moving arachnids with a world-wide distribution. Within this suborder of Opiliones, the family Pettalidae Shear 1980 has a typical Gondwanan distribution with representatives known from Chile, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia. 48 species and subspecies are known for the family (including the new species presented here) (Giribet 2000); 29 of them, or 60 % of the total diversity of the family and 25 % of the total diversity of the suborder, occur in New Zealand in what appears to be a spectacular peak in the diversity of the group.

Most pettalid species are known from very few specimens collected only from the type locality. Hirst (1925) described the first New Zealand genus and species, *Rakaia antipodiana* Hirst 1925, from the South Island. Subsequently, Phillipps and Grimmett (1932) described *Rakaia dorothea* Phillipps and Grimmett 1932 from the North Island, and in 1948 and 1952 Ray Forster published two extensive monographs describing the majority of the species currently known, as well as the new genus *Neopurcellia* Forster 1948.