

First record of *Ciocalypta* (Demospongiae: Halichondrida) from Brazil, southwestern Atlantic, with the description of a new species

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Abstract

A new species of *Ciocalypta* Bowerbank, 1862 is described from the coasts of Santa Catarina and São Paulo (Brazil), collected at depths of 12–25 m. The fistules have a glassy, translucent appearance, through which the central spicular axis is clearly visible. The megascleres are only oxeas. Colour of the fistules is white-yellowish alive, and whitish in alcohol. Its nearest relative in the Atlantic is *C. penicillus* from which it differs by a series of traits: smaller, less cavernous fistules, thinner secondary tracts of megascleres in the fistules, and possession of oxeas exclusively.

Key words: Taxonomy, Porifera, sponges, Halichondriidae, southwestern Atlantic

Introduction

The sponge genus *Ciocalypta* Bowerbank, 1862 is defined by the possession of erect, conically tapering, fingershaped fistules rising above the sediment. The spicules are styles and/ or oxeas, usually in two size categories. The genus has ca. 15 species, mostly distributed in temperate and subtropical waters of the Atlantic and South Pacific (Erpenbeck & Van Soest 2002), being predominantly confined to shallow waters. Van Soest *et al.* (1990) stressed the possession of styles as a diagnostic character, but the view of Topsent (1921) that oxeas and styles may occur in variable dominance was followed in the latest taxonomic revision (Erpenbeck & Van Soest 2002), who argued that a small complement of oxeas is present even in *Ciocalypta*'s type species.