

Taxonomic status of *Pennatula argentina* Acuña & Zamponi, 1992 (Cnidaria: Octocorallia)

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Abstract

This is a taxonomic study of the species *Pennatula argentina* Acuña & Zamponi, 1992. The paratype is redescribed with reference to a number of characters: polyps arising directly from the rachis; the presence of polyps in oblique rows; adjacent polyps fused at the base; polyps non-retractile; absence of calyces; absence of sclerites except for minute ovals and circles in the interior of the stalk; and a robust peduncle with prominent bulb. The material is here identified as *Anthoptilum grandiflorum* (Verrill, 1879). Therefore, *Pennatula argentina* is considered a junior synonym of *Anthoptilum grandiflorum*.

Key words: Octocorallia, *Pennatula argentina*, *Anthoptilum grandiflorum*, taxonomy, revision, Cnidaria

Introduction

The systematics of octocorals has been debated since the beginning of twentieth century. The problems associated with taxonomic works on octocorals are based on a complex classification and there are few specialists, which leads to the appearance of errors in the identification of species. The case of *Pennatula argentina* is an excellent example of this problem.

Acuña and Zamponi (1992) published the first paper on pennatulaceans of the Argentine Sea, describing two new species, *P. argentina* and *Halipteris heptazooidea*. In 1996, Bayer published the corrected and augmented version of the “Bibliography of Octocorallia from Pliny to the present”, with comments about content and other aspects of publications given in square brackets. The citation for Acuña and Zamponi (1992) included Bayer’s following comment: “Establishes *Pennatula argentina* and *Halipteris heptazooidea* as new species and reports *Pennatula inflata* Kükenthal and *Anthoptilum grandiflorum* (Ver-