

Pycnogonids (Arthropoda: Pycnogonida) from French Cruises to Melanesia

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Abstract

Seventy specimens of pycnogonid from New Caledonia and the Solomon Islands, collected during cruises from the Paris Museum, are described. No pycnogonids have been recorded previously from the Solomon Islands. Of the sixteen species identified, three ammonotheids, *Bathyzetes umbrella*, *Cilunculus cymobostrychos* and *C. mergus*, are new to science. The distinctions of the sibling species *Colossendeis pipetta* Stock, 1991 and *C. sinuosa* Stock, 1997 are analyzed morphometrically. The pycnogonid fauna of the Melanesia-Micronesia-Polynesia region is summarized.

Key words: Pycnogonida, Melanesia, Pacific, *Nymphon*, *Ammothella*, *Ascorhynchus*, *Bathyzetes*, *Cilunculus*, *Endeis*, *Pallenopsis*, *Anoplodactylus*, *Colossendeis*

Introduction

The intensive sampling by cruises from the Paris Museum over the last twenty years has revealed a high diversity of pycnogonids in the western Pacific, particularly in the area of the Melanesian Island systems. Published descriptions of this material have appeared as it has become available. Child (1977) was the first to record pycnogonids from New Caledonia, from relatively shallow waters. Bamber (1997) also reported on shallow water species of *Anoplodactylus* and *Callipallene* from New Caledonia. The pycnogonid material described to date from the MUSORSTOM campaigns, largely from New Caledonia and its surroundings, have been reported by Stock (1991a; 1997) and Bamber (2000; 2004). Bamber (2000) has summarized the history of pycnogonid recording from this region, which in addition to New Caledonia has covered Vanuatu, Fiji, Tahiti and the Marquesas. In the wider environs, Child (1982; 1983; 1988b; 1989; 1991; 1996; 1998) recorded a number of species from islands in Melanesia, Micronesia (e.g. the Marshall Islands, Palau) and Polynesia (Samoa, Tonga), and Child (1988a) and Stock (1991b) reported pycnogonids from the Philippines.