

Haplosclerida (Porifera: Demospongiae) from the coast of Maranhão State, Brazil, Southwestern Atlantic

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Abstract

This work deals with haplosclerid sponges off the coast of Maranhão State, northeastern coast of Brazilian shelf (southwestern Atlantic). A new species is described, *Haliclona (Halichoclona) lernerae*. Four species are recorded for the first time for the Brazilian coast: *Amphimedon caribica* (Pulitzer-Finali, 1986); *Niphates lutea* Lehnert & Van Soest, 1999; *Neopetrosia subtriangularis* (Duchassaing, 1850) and *Petrosia (Petrosia) weinbergi* Van Soest, 1980. Three species were recollected from the southwestern Atlantic and have their geographic distribution extended on the Brazilian coast: *Callyspongia (Cladochalina) vaginalis* (Duchassaing & Michelotti, 1864), *Oceanapia bartschi* (De Laubenfels, 1934) and *Xestospongia muta* (Schmidt, 1870). Two species were collected for the first time from the Maranhão State Coast: *Niphates erecta* Duchassaing & Michelotti, 1864 and *Neopetrosia proxima* (Duchassaing & Michelotti, 1864). A taxonomic study of those samples is given, including description, illustrations and geographic distribution.

Key words: Porifera, Haplosclerida, Maranhão State, Brazil, Taxonomy

Introduction

Knowledge of the haplosclerid sponge fauna from the north-northeast coast of Brazil (Amapá to Maranhão coast) is limited to a few records. The only haplosclerids registered were recorded by Collette & Rützler (1977), based on material collected by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration R/V Oregon II on May, 1975, off the mouth of the Amazon river (01°42'N / 47°24'W–00°33'N / 46°19'W, 62–70 m depths),