

A new species of *Opisthosyllis* (Polychaeta: Syllidae) from California (U.S.A.)

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Abstract

Opisthosyllis leslieharrisae n. sp. is described from Santa Catalina Island, California. It differs from all other species of the genus in the following characters: dorsum densely covered by papillae in two sizes, and a distinct colour pattern consisting of white spots distributed transversally along the segments (only seen in live specimens) and dark red areas located on cirrophores, over the third segment, and in the middle of the second and the remainder segments (maintained in formalin fixed specimens). The new species is also characterized by the tooth located in the third quarter of the pharynx, and long spines on the blades of compound chaetae.

Key Words: *Opisthosyllis*, Syllidae, polychaetes, taxonomy, new species.

Introduction

The genus *Opisthosyllis* was established by Langerhans (1879) when he described *O. brunnea*, the type species of the genus, and *O. viridis* from the Madeira Island in the Atlantic Ocean. *Opisthosyllis* was diagnosed by a combination of characters, with one of them being used for the etymology; the presence and location of the pharyngeal tooth in the posterior part of the pharynx. Other features used to diagnose the genus were an elongated body with numerous segments, palps fused at the base, a prostomium with three antennae, tentacles and dorsal cirri jointed, and a conical ventral cirri. Later on, in the beginning of the twentieth century, several authors (Verrill 1900; Augener 1913; Fauvel 1921; Monro 1939) added new species to the genus extending its distribution to other localities in the Atlantic Ocean (*Opisthosyllis nuchalis* Verrill, 1900 from Bermudas), as well as the Indian Ocean (*Opisthosyllis australis* Augener, 1913 from Western Australia, and *Opisthosyllis ankylochaeta* Fauvel, 1921 from Madagascar), and the Red Sea