

***Achaeta becki* sp. nov. (Oligochaeta: Enchytraeidae) from Amazonian forest soils**

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Abstract

A new species of the mainly terrestrial enchytraeid oligochaete genus *Achaeta* is described from 'terra firme' soils of the Amazonian primary rain forest near Manaus, Brazil. *Achaeta becki* sp. nov. is about 6 mm long; its main distinguishing characters are a very short vas deferens, thickened septa in almost all segments, and a dorsal blood vessel origin in the clitellar region. Oesophageal appendages, pyriform glands (=setal follicles), and secondary pharyngeal gland lobes are absent. Further distinguishing characters are: pharyngeal glands separate in VI, extending into VII, preclitellar nephridia at 6/7 and 8/9, spermathecal ectal pores lateral. The new species is most similar to *A. maorica* Benham, 1903, *A. neotropica* Černosvitov, 1937, and *A. iridescens* Christoffersen, 1979, all from the southern hemisphere. Similarities and differences are discussed in detail.

Key words: Annelida, Oligochaeta: Enchytraeidae, *Achaeta*, new species

Introduction

A new species of the mainly terrestrial enchytraeid genus *Achaeta* was found in soil samples from a primary rain forest plot near the Brazilian Agroforestry Research Facility near Manaus, Brazil (EMBRAPA-CPAA: Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária, Centro de Pesquisa Agroflorestal na Amazônia Ocidental). Three species of *Achaeta* were known so far from South America, *A. neotropica* Černosvitov, 1937, *A. iridescens* Christoffersen, 1979, and *A. piti* Bittencourt, 1974. The new *Achaeta* species described here is morphologically closely related to two of them (*A. neotropica* and *A. iridescens*) by the origin of the dorsal blood vessel in the clitellar region and the absence of both pyriform glands and oesophageal appendages.

The soil samples that contained the new species were taken as part of a study dealing with soil fauna and litter decomposition in the framework of a German-Brazilian project