

***Rhynchelmis aleutensis* n. sp. (Clitellata: Lumbriculidae) from Adak Island, Alaska**

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Abstract

A new lumbriculid worm, *Rhynchelmis aleutensis*, is described from streams on Adak Island, Alaska. The new species does not resemble other Alaskan or Siberian *Rhynchelmis* species. The paired spermathecal diverticula and the morphology of the male pores and atria suggest that it is more closely related to a species group known only from the western United States, south of Canada. The latter group has been associated with *Sutroa* Eisen, 1888.

Key words: Clitellata, Oligochaeta, Lumbriculidae, *Rhynchelmis*, taxonomy, Aleutian Islands

Introduction

The Nearctic species attributed to the lumbriculid genus *Rhynchelmis* Hoffmeister were recently reviewed by Fend and Brinkhurst (2000). The eleven described Nearctic species are known only from the western part of the continent, and all but two appear restricted to the area south of the continental ice sheets of the last glacial maximum. The latter two species appear to be endemic to northern Alaska, based on a single survey by Holmquist (1976). The large number of occurrences of those species (as well as other Lumbriculidae) within that survey area indicates that suitable habitat is widespread in the region. Nevertheless, other than Holmquist's study, there are few records of aquatic oligochaetes from Alaska. This limitation may relate to a lack of collection effort as much as to actual distributions. The recent appearance of specimens of an undescribed *Rhynchelmis* species in freshwater collections from Adak Island (in the Aleutian Island chain) is therefore not surprising.