

***Ringanui*, a new genus of stygobitic amphipod from New Zealand (Amphipoda: Gammaridea: Paraleptamphopidae)**

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Abstract

A new genus is established for two new species of paraleptamphopid amphipods. Both species are stygobites inhabiting alluvial aquifers up to at least 18 m beneath the Canterbury Plains in New Zealand. First collected by Charles Chilton in 1882, these two species became confused with *Paraleptamphopus subterraneus*. The new genus, *Ringanui*, is a significant step in resolving this confusion. *Ringanui* differs from *Paraleptamphopus* on several characters and is most easily recognised by diverse gnathopods, the first of which is enlarged relative to gnathopod 2. The two species are described and illustrated in detail. They differ in size and gnathopod characteristics, but other differences are small. *Ringanui koonuiroa* is the smaller species and is most easily recognised by the single, very long robust seta defining the palm of gnathopod 1. The second species, *R. toonuiiti*, is the larger, but its palmar defining spine is relatively short. Both species occur together at the same locations and apparently in the same habitat.

Key words: Crustacea, Groundwater, new genus

Introduction

Groundwater amphipods from New Zealand intrigued the international scientific community when first described by Charles Chilton in 1882 (a, b). Amongst the first three species described was Chilton's *Calliope subterranea* Chilton, 1882. Chilton re-described the species in considerable detail in his 1894 monograph and subsequently reported it from numerous locations within the South and North Islands of New Zealand. The species was placed in the new genus *Paraleptamphopus* by Stebbing (1899) and it, including the darkly pigmented epigeal *P. caeruleus* Thomson, 1885, has been reported quite widely in New Zealand by freshwater biologists (e.g. Chapman & Lewis 1976). At a taxonomic level, however, the genus and family Paraleptamphopidae Bousfield, 1983 remain poorly understood.