

## A redescription of *Leucothoe spinicarpa* (Abildgaard, 1789) based on material from the North Atlantic (Amphipoda: Leucothoidae)

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### Abstract

The identification of *Leucothoe spinicarpa* (Abildgaard) has presented a problem for taxonomists in recent years as it is widely regarded to be part of a species complex with cosmopolitan distribution. In an attempt to clarify the status of this species, a neotype of *Leucothoe spinicarpa* is herein designated and a complete redescription of the species given.

**Key words:** Amphipoda, Leucothoidae, *Leucothoe*, North Atlantic Ocean, redescription.

### Introduction

Leucothoid amphipods are often reported as associates of ascidians, sponges and clams (Vader and Beehler, 1983; Thiel, 1999, 2000; Crowe and Thomas, 2002), where they find a stable microhabitat that provides shelter from predation. *Leucothoe* Leach, 1814, is a cosmopolitan genus, currently comprised of 66 species. Although *Leucothoe* species are most commonly reported from sponges and ascidians, they may also be found in fine sand or mud (Krapp-Schickel, 1975b; Thomas and Ortiz, 1995), or in association with algae, corals, or coral rubble (Barnard, 1970; Myers, 1985c).

*Leucothoe spinicarpa* was originally described by Abildgaard (1789) from the Skagerrak Sea off Denmark. Throughout the 1800's a number of scientists reported *Leucothoe spinicarpa* from the North Atlantic, Scandinavia, and the Mediterranean (Latrielle, 1803; Sars, 1876, 1895; Della Valle, 1893; Norman, 1895; Boeck, 1876). Several other morphologically similar species (*L. articulatus* Montagu, *L. denticulata* A. Costa, *L. antarctica* Pfeffer) were also described during this period, adding some confusion to the identification of *L. spinicarpa* sensu Abildgaard. In one of the first thorough reviews of the species, Sars (1895) produced an excellent description of *L. spinicarpa* from Norway, recognizing