

First record of Prolecithophora (Platyhelminthes) from Argentina: *Plagiostomum cilioejaculator* sp. n.

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Abstract

In this work a new benthic species of the genus *Plagiostomum* is described from the littoral zone of Río de la Plata (Argentina). *Plagiostomum cilioejaculator* sp. n. is the fourth eyeless species of the genus to be described. The male reproductive system is characterized by a muscular and somewhat curved penis, approximately 260 µm long. The ejaculatory duct is lined by a densely ciliated epithelium. The female reproductive system is typical of the genus. *Plagiostomum cilioejaculator* sp. n. is the first species of Prolecithophora described from Argentinian waters.

Key words: Plagiostomidae, benthos, turbellarian, Río de la Plata, estuary

Introduction

Thirty-six of the 150 species of Prolecithophora known worldwide (Tyler *et al.*, 2005) have been described from South America (Noreña *et al.*, 2003). Fifteen of these species belong to genus *Plagiostomum*, and most of these (12 species) are known from the coast of Brazil, where they were described or reported by Marcus in the mid 20th century (Marcus, 1946; 1948; 1951; 1952; 1954). Species of genus *Plagiostomum* are small (0.5–4 mm in length), and mostly marine benthic. They are characterized by an anterior mouth, simple intestine and a *pharynx variabilis*. The brain is not encapsulated. The ovaries are compact with ectolecithal eggs, and the vitellaria are diffuse. The male gonopore is anterior to the female gonopore and leads to a common atrium (Cannon, 1986).

The goal of this work is to describe a new species of *Plagiostomum* collected from the littoral benthos of the middle zone (Boschi, 1988) of Río de la Plata in Argentina. This represents the first record of a prolecithophoran from Argentina and also from a brackish aquatic environment, given that earlier accounts of prolecithophorans from the South