

Chitons (Mollusca: Polyplacophora) from the southern Chilean Comau Fjord, with reinstatement of *Tonicia calbucensis* Plate, 1897

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Abstract

The hardbottom benthic communities of the southern Chilean fjord region are among the least studied worldwide. Within the framework of biodiversity surveys of the Comau Fjord system (42°10' – 42°30'S), new distributional and biological information on chitons has been obtained. This paper deals with nine species, belonging to four families, observed and collected in shallow water (0–39 m depth) between 2003 and 2005. Photographs of living specimens in their habitat are given for the first time. Radulae and external features are compared. Problematic taxa, such as *Chiton magnificus*, are discussed. Based on examination of the type material, *Tonicia calbucensis* is re-evaluated and recognized as a valid species, differing from *T. lebruni* by a number of characters. For the first time an infection by an endoparasitic nematode is reported in chitons. The species reported herein were already known from southern Chile, but the species composition in Comau Fjord system differs from that of the more exposed Pacific Ocean coast.

Key words: Mollusca, Polyplacophora, Leptochitonidae, Ischnochitonidae, Chitonidae, Mopaliidae, Chile, taxonomy, biology, zoogeography

Introduction

The Polyplacophora of the southern Chilean fjord system (42°S–55°S) have been studied little because of the remoteness, difficult access, and inhospitable conditions of the region. Leloup (1956) was the first to summarize all available geographical and taxonomic information on southern Chilean chitons. More recently, Reid & Osorio (2000), Osorio *et al.* (2002), and Osorio & Reid (2004) contributed further distributional data on the Polyplacophora from the southern Chilean fjord region.