



A new species of *Valettiopsis* Holmes, 1908 (Crustacea: Gammaridea: Lysianassoidea) from abyssal waters off California

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Abstract

Deep-sea sampling off the central California coast has provided numerous material of a new amphipod species of the genus *Valettiopsis* Holmes, 1908. *Valettiopsis concava* sp. nov. is described from abyssal collections taken from baited traps and sponge stalk communities. Morphological characteristics which distinguish the new species from its congeners are found in the dorsal profile of the body, integument surface, and shape of coxa 2 and basis of pereopod 7. This contribution presents the second recorded species of the genus *Valettiopsis* described from the north Pacific, the first being the type species *V. dentata* Holmes, 1908. The new species is fully illustrated and compared with related species. The generic identity of *Valettiopsis ruffoi* Serejo & Wakabara, 2003 is discussed. A key to *Valettiopsis* species is provided.

Key words: *Valettiopsis concava*, new species, Amphipoda, Lysianassoidea, abyssal, deep-sea, baited traps, taxonomy, California, north Pacific

Introduction

Species of the genus *Valettiopsis* Holmes, 1908 are typically found living at moderate to great ocean depths and have, as a consequence been infrequently collected and recorded (Lincoln & Thurston 1983). Surprisingly however, since 2003 four new *Valettiopsis* species have been described, bringing the total for the genus prior to this study to seven. Serejo & Wakabara (2003) described *Valettiopsis ruffoi* from the southeastern Brazilian coast and Horton (2004) added three more species; *V. lincolni* (Bay of Biscay), *V. longidactyla* (off Angolan coast), and *V. minuta* (South Carolina). The remaining species are *V. dentata* Holmes, 1908 (type species), *V. macrodactyla* Chevreux, 1909 and *V. multidentata* J.L. Barnard, 1961. All of the species except *V. multidentata* and *V. ruffoi* have been reported from baited traps, as is the new species described herein.

The generic status of *Valettiopsis ruffoi* appears to be in question. Serejo & Wakabara (2003) placed this species in *Valettiopsis*, but did not cite the paper of Barnard & Ingram (1990). Due to this oversight, they were probably unaware of the four new genera of the *Valettiopsis* group, newly elaborated by Barnard & Ingram (1990). *Valettiopsis ruffoi* is much closer to one of these genera, than to *Valettiopsis*. The transfer of *V. ruffoi* to another genus will be undertaken in a future paper, but until then, it is retained in *Valettiopsis*. Interestingly, no *Valettiopsis* species were reported on by Barnard & Ingram (1990) from their study of deep-sea thermal vents near the Galapagos Rift, even though very large numbers (~ 100,000) of lysianassoid amphipods were obtained. Nonetheless, they described four new genera, all having close affinities to *Valettiopsis*.

The removal of the genus *Valettiopsis* and its ally *Valettietta* Lincoln & Thurston (1983) from within the superfamily Lysianassoidea was suggested by Thurston (1989), largely due to the presence of a strongly den-