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A new genus and two new species of *Saurodocus* (Crustacea: Amphipoda: Melitidae) from Lizard Island, Queensland, Australia

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Abstract

A new genus, *Saurodocus* **gen. nov.**, and two new species, *S. hobbit* **sp. nov.** and *S. minimarenus* **sp. nov.** are described from Lizard Island, Queensland, Australia, collected from coarse coral sands with coral rubble in shallow water. *Saurodocus* belongs to the *Ceradocus* group — a group of genera within the Melitidae allied to *Ceradocus* Costa, 1853, united by a widened triangular inner plate on maxilla 2 and setation on the inner margin of the inner plates of both maxillae. The combination of an un-produced anteroventral corner on coxa 1, lack of posteroventral lobe on coxa 4 and a deeply cleft telson separates *Saurodocus* from all other genera in the *Ceradocus* group.

Key words: Crustacea, Amphipoda, Melitidae, *Saurodocus hobbit*, *Saurodocus minimarenus*, new genus, new species, taxonomy

Introduction

Melitid amphipods are distributed worldwide in both cold and warm waters. They occur in various habitats including sand, algae, sponges and bryozoans. During an amphipod workshop in early 2005 at Lizard Island on the Great Barrier Reef, a new genus, *Saurodocus* **gen. nov.** and two new species, *S. hobbit* **sp. nov**. and *S. minimarenus* **sp. nov.**, of melitid amphipods were discovered. They are described herein.

Material and methods

Samples from coarse coral sands with coral rubble were collected on snorkel and SCUBA from Lizard Island, Queensland, Australia. Character states of the new species were then scored into a world Melitidae DELTA (Dallwitz 2005) database. *Saurodocus* was compared with all other genera using the DELTA programme Intkey to produce genus and species level diagnoses. Taxonomic descriptions were generated from the database. The material is lodged in the marine invertebrate collection at the Australian Museum, Sydney, Australia (AM). The following abbreviations are used on the plates: **A,** antenna; **EP,** epimeron; **G,** gnathopod; **Md,** mandible; **Mp,** maxilliped; **Mx,** maxilla; **P,** pereopod; **T,** telson; **U,** uropod, **UL**, upper lip.

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