



## Taxonomic position of *Pontonides sympathes* De Ridder & Holthuis and species of the genus *Veleronia* Holthuis (Decapoda, Palaemonidae, Pontoniinae) with the description of a new genus

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### Abstract

The type specimens of *Pontonides sympathes* De Ridder & Holthuis, 1979, *Veleronia serratifrons* Holthuis, 1951, and *V. laevifrons* Holthuis, 1951 were re-examined. *Pontonides sympathes* is transferred to *Veleronia* Holthuis, 1951, based on morphological similarity with *V. serratifrons*, the type species of the genus. At the same time, a new genus, *Pseudovele-ronia* gen. nov., is erected for *Veleronia laevifrons*. Detailed re-descriptions of all studied species as well as a key to the genera *Pontonides* Borradaile, 1917, *Veleronia* and *Pseudovele-ronia* gen. nov. are given.

**Key words:** *Pontonides*, *Veleronia*, new genus, new combination, gorgonarians

### Introduction

The pontoniine shrimp *Pontonides sympathes* De Ridder and Holthuis, 1979, is known as a symbiont of the antipatharian coral *Antipathes galapagensis* (Antipatharia, Antipathidae) in the Galapagos and Clipperton Atoll (Eastern Pacific region) (De Ridder & Holthuis 1979; Heard 1986; J. Poupin, pers. comm.). The taxonomic position of this species has, however, been unclear. The species was originally referred to the genus *Pontonides* Borradaile, 1917, on account of the concave anterolateral margin of the carapace, the absence of an exopod on maxilliped III, the presence of rows of stout setae on the tips of the fingers of pereopod I, the submarginal position of the dorsal spines of the telson, and the appendix masculina being twice as short as the appendix interna. However, *Pontonides sympathes* clearly differs from the other species in the genus by the presence of a developed exopod on maxilliped I, a straight distal margin of the dactyl of maxilliped II and the absence of fusiform setae on the basal segments of maxilliped I–III. Additionally, it is the only known species of the genus occurring in the Eastern Pacific region while other species are known exclusively from the Indo-West Pacific (see Marin 2007). Okuno (1999) suggested that *P. sympathes* should be excluded from the genus *Pontonides*, although Bruce (2005) and Marin (2007) retained it in *Pontonides*.

During a visit to Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie in Leiden, the Netherlands, the author examined the type specimens of *Pontonides sympathes* to verify its taxonomic position. Examination of the holo- and paratypes confirmed that *P. sympathes* does not belong to *Pontonides*, and is closely related to *Veleronia serratifrons* Holthuis, 1951, the type species of the genus *Veleronia* Holthuis, 1951. Concurrently, examination of the second known species of *Veleronia*, *V. laevifrons* Holthuis, 1951, revealed that it differs significantly from the type species and is herein transferred to a new genus. All studied material is deposited in the Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum, Leiden, the Netherlands (formerly Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie).