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Nymphodora gen. nov., a new genus of Nannoniscidae Hansen, 1916 (Isopoda, Asellota, Janiroidea) from the high Arctic*

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Abstract

A new isopod genus is described from the Canada Basin, *Nymphodora* gen. nov. The type species of the genus, *Nymphodora fletcheri* (Paul & George, 1975) comb. nov., was first described as Desmosomatidae in the genus *Mirabilicoxa* and then later assigned to *Chelibranchus* by Kussakin (1999). However, the species bears characters with a greater affinity to Nannoniscidae, such as a bulbous terminal article of antenna 1 and fusions of the pereonites 6, 7 and pleotelson. Here, the species is redescribed and transferred to a new genus in Nannoniscidae.

Key words: Malacostraca, *Nymphodora fletcheri* (Paul & George, 1975) comb. nov., *Nannoniscus*, *Panetela*, Canada Basin, deep sea

Introduction

As with many taxa, Isopoda from the Northern seas are comparatively well studied, especially those from the shallows (Svavarsson *et al.* 1993). To a large extent this is due to identification of samples from more than a century of benthic surveys (see Sars 1899; Ohlin 1901; Hansen 1916; Svavarsson *et al.* 1990, 1993; Brandt 1995; Brandt *et al.* 1996). Sampling during these surveys is highly geographically and bathymetrically biased; whilst areas such as the Norwegian and Greenland seas have been fairly well studied, the sampling effort in other areas such as the deep Canada Basin (Bluhm *et al.* 2005) or the central Arctic basins has been negligible (Svavarsson *et al.* 1993; Malyutina & Kussakin 1996).

Generally (and arguably) the Arctic benthos is considered to be impoverished compared to similar size areas elsewhere due to its young age and isolation (e.g. see Svavarsson 1997; Piepenburg 2005). This at least seems to be true for the deep isopod fauna (e.g. Dahl *et al.* 1976; Svavarsson *et al.* 1990, 1993; Svavarsson 1997). At the species level, about 50% of the asellote species are endemic to the Northern seas, but to date just one isopod genus (*Cryodesma*) has been recorded as endemic to this area (Svavarsson *et al.* 1993).

In the current paper, a new genus in the family Nannoniscidae restricted to the Arctic is described. During a revision of the Nannoniscidae and the Desmosomatidae the type material of *Chelibranchus fletcheri* (Paul & George, 1975) was examined. This species was previously described in the desmosomatid genus *Mirabilicoxa* by Paul & George (1975) and later assigned to *Chelibranchus* by Kussakin (1999). However, due to the presence of a bulbous terminal article of antenna 1 and fused pereonites 6, 7 and pleotelson, this species is here transferred to a new genus in Nannoniscidae, *Nymphodora* gen. nov.

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