



The first blind *Paranthura* species (Crustacea, Isopoda, Paranthuridae) from the 'El Cachucho' Marine Protected Area (Le Danois Bank, southern Bay of Biscay)

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Abstract

A new paranthurid isopod, *Paranthura santiparraei* sp. nov. is described from specimens collected in the 'El Cachucho' Marine Protected Area, southern Bay of Biscay. The new species can be distinguished from all the known species of the genus *Paranthura* by the absence of eyes, from the native NE Atlantic species *Paranthura nigropunctata* and *Paranthura costana* by the lack of body pigmentation, antenna 1 and pereopod morphology and from the non-indigenous species *Paranthura japonica* (recently discovered in the Arcachon Bay) by the pleonites not fused mediodorsally. The genus *Paranthura* is rediagnosed to accommodate the new taxon and an identification key is provided for European species. Ecological data on the new species are presented.

Key words: Isopoda, Paranthuridae, *Paranthura*, new species, 'El Cachucho' MPA, Le Danois Bank, Bay of Biscay

Introduction

In their world list of anthuroid isopods, Negoescu and Wägele (1984) cited 57 genera, among which the genus *Paranthura* was the most speciose, with 41 valid species. Later on, many new *Paranthura* species from various geographical areas were added to this first list (see Appeltans *et al.* 2010, Schotte *et al.* 2011), showing a high diversity of the genus in the Indian and Pacific oceans. Poore (2001) rediagnosed the Paranthuridae mainly based on the absence of statocyst on telson and only included 6 genera in this family: *Califanthura*, *Colanthura*, *Cruranthura*, *Cruregens*, *Paranthura* and *Pseudanthura*. Taking into account the most recent studies, the genus *Paranthura* comprises 64 valid species, 3 of them recorded in European waters: the native species *P. nigropunctata* (Lucas, 1849) and *P. costana* Bate & Westwood, 1868 and the non-indigenous one *P. japonica* Richardson, 1909, recently discovered in the Arcachon Bay, SW France (unpublished record).

This paper deals with the description of the first blind species in the genus *Paranthura*, a bathyal species collected at the Le Danois Bank (S Bay of Biscay), nowadays classified as the first offshore Spanish Marine Protected Area ('El Cachucho' MPA; see Heredia *et al.* 2008). This new *Paranthura* is compared with the previously known species from European waters and an identification key is provided for these species. Furthermore, some ecological data on the new species are also given.

Material and methods

Within the ECOMARG project framework (see www.ecomarg.net), two multidisciplinary surveys ECOMARG 03 (October 2003) and ECOMARG 04 (April 2004) were carried out in the 'El Cachucho' MPA (Fig. 1). During these surveys, the suprabenthic fauna was quantitatively sampled with a suprabenthic sled equipped with opening-clos-