



## First species of *Leptochelia* Dana, 1849 (Crustacea: Tanaidacea) from the Eastern Pacific, with an annotated checklist and identification keys for the genus

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### Abstract

Forty three species of leptocheliids are known worldwide. In the American region only eight species have been described from the Western Atlantic, while for the Eastern Pacific none have been described, suggesting that the diversity of this family has been severely underestimated in this region. Here we describe the first species of *Leptochelia* from the Eastern Pacific, *Leptochelia mexicana* n. sp., which is characterized by the males having a spiniform seta on the second segment of uropodal endopod, a novel feature for the genus. In addition, the first annotated checklist and a taxonomic key with illustrations for *Leptochelia* species are included. The list includes the type locality, type depository, distribution, habitat and, in some cases, remarks.

**Key words:** America, crustaceans, leptocheliids, new species, Pacific, tanaidaceans

### Resumen

Cuarenta y tres especies de leptochelíidos son reconocidos a nivel mundial. En el continente americano sólo ocho especies se han descrito para el Atlántico occidental, mientras que en el Pacífico oriental no hay ninguna especie descrita, sugiriendo que la diversidad de esta familia ha sido severamente subestimada en esta región. En este trabajo describimos la primera especie de *Leptochelia* del Pacífico oriental, *Leptochelia mexicana* n. sp., la cual se caracteriza porque los machos presentan una seta espiniforme en el segundo artejo del endópodo uropodal, que es una característica novedosa para el género. Además, se incluye el primer listado comentado y una clave de taxonómica ilustrada para las especies de *Leptochelia*. La lista incluye la localidad tipo, ubicación de los tipos, distribución, hábitat, y en casos necesarios una sección de comentarios.

**Palabras clave:** América, crustáceos, leptochelíidos, nueva especie, Pacífico, tanaidáceos

### Introduction

Within the tanaidaceans, the genus *Leptochelia* Dana, 1849 has been one of the most-studied taxa worldwide (Brown 1957; Larsen & Rayment 2002). Leptocheliids comprise a group of small crustaceans that occur in tropical and temperate biomes, from shallow to deep waters, although mainly in coral reefs, seagrasses, sandy habitats and as part of the fouling communities on artificial structures. This group includes some of the most abundant benthic species associated with seagrass and macroalgal habitats (Edgar 2012).

Until now, 43 species of *Leptochelia* have been described (Anderson 2013). Of these species, eight are from American coastlines: *Leptochelia algicola* (Harger, 1878) from Noank and Woods Hole, Massachusetts, U.S.A; *L. brasiliensis* (Dana, 1849) from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; *L. dubia* (Krøyer, 1842) from Salvador de Bahia, Brazil; *L. forresti* (Stebbing, 1896) from Mouth of Perham Harbour, Antigua; *L. longichelipes* [*nomen nudum*] (Krøyer in

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