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Ischnomesus harrietae sp. nov., a new benthic asellote (Crustacea: Isopoda: Ischnomesidae) from bathyal bottoms of the southern Bay of Biscay

FIONA A. KAVANAGH[1,4], INMACULADA FRUTOS[2] & JEAN CLAUDE SORBE[3]

[1]*Ryan Institute, National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland. E-mail: kavfiona@gmail.com*
[2]*Departamento Ciencias de la Vida, EU-US Marine Biodiversity Group, Universidad de Alcalá, 28871 Alcalá de Henares, Spain. E-mail: inmafparralejo@gmail.com*
[3]*Station Marine, 2 rue Jolyet, 33120, Arcachon, France. E-mail: sorbejc@gmail.com*
[4]*Corresponding author*

Abstract

A new species of Ischnomesidae (Crustacea: Isopoda: Asellota), *Ischnomesus harrietae* **sp. nov.** is described from the southern Bay of Biscay. This new species is distinctive due to the presence of numerous pedestal setae arranged in longitudinal rows on pereonite 5. Because of this morphological peculiarity, it can be easily distinguished from the four other *Ischnomesus* species previously reported from bathyal/abyssal bottoms of the European continental margin. Within its known distributional area, the new species inhabits sandy and muddy bottoms between 619 and 1099 m, with a maximum abundance of 41.8 individuals per 100 m^2 recorded at approximately 700 m on the Arcachon Plateau. Another new species is also reported, *Ischnomesus* sp.1, represented by one specimen only and briefly described. An identification key to European species of *Ischnomesus* is provided.

Key words: Isopoda, Asellota, Ischnomesidae, *Ischnomesus*, new species, Bay of Biscay, deep-sea

Introduction

Ischnomesus is one of the nine genera belonging to the family Ischnomesidae (Crustacea: Isopoda), comprising marine species from bathyal, abyssal and hadal depths (Wolff 1956, 1962). This genus was established by Richardson in 1908 to replace the invalid preoccupied name *Ischnosoma* G.O. Sars, 1868, with *Ischnomesus bispinosus* (G.O. Sars, 1868) retained as the type species by monotypy. It is the most speciose in the family, to date containing 36 species described from the Atlantic, Pacific and Southern Oceans as well as from Northern Polar and Caribbean Seas. Some changes were made after creating this genus. Three species placed in the former genus *Rhabdomesus* Richardson, 1908 (*R. bacilloides* Beddard, 1886, *R. bacillus* Beddard, 1886 and *R. bacillopsis* Barnard, 1920) and one species primarily placed in the genus *Stylomesus* Wolff, 1956 (*S. gracilis* Birstein, 1960) were transferred to *Ischnomesus* (see Hansen 1916, Wolff 1956 and Birstein 1971). *I. gracilis* Chardy, 1974 was renamed *I. chardyi* by Kussakin (1988) because the initial species name was preoccupied (*Stylomesus gracilis* Birstein, 1960 transferred to *Ischnomesus* by Birstein in 1971). *I. hessleri* Kussakin, 1988 was synonymized with *I. norvegicus* Svavarsson, 1984 by Malyutina & Kussakin (1996). This paper describes a new *Ischnomesus* species, *Ischnomesus harrietae* **sp. nov.**, from the southern Bay of Biscay, mentioned as '*Ischnomesus* sp. A' (Elizalde *et al.* 1993; Sorbe & Weber 1995; Frutos & Sorbe 2014) or '*Ischnomesus* sp.' (Dauvin *et al.* 1995) in previous studies on suprabenthic assemblages from that area. This paper also reports on another new species, *Ischnomesus* sp.1, co-occurring with *I. harrietae* **sp. nov.** at one station of the southern Bay of Biscay. However, as there is just one representative specimen in poor condition, this species is only briefly described and it is referred to throughout the text as *Ischnomesus* sp. 1. An identification key is provided for *Ischnomesus* species recorded within the area corresponding to the 'European Register of Marine Species' (ERMS). Furthermore, some ecological data on *I. harrietae* **sp. nov.** are also given.

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