

THE ASELOTOTA OF CALIFORNIA

Donald B. Cadien

MBC, Applied Environmental Sciences
947 Newhall St., Costa Mesa CA.

Asellote isopods form one of nine suborders of the peracarid order Isopoda. There are somewhere over 800 described species in the suborder, of which 39 reportedly occur in California waters. The suborder is characterized by

- »bilateral symmetry (unlike most epicarids)
- »well developed antennae (unlike remaining epicarids)
- »1pair of maxillipeds (unlike Gnathiidae which have 2)
- »terminal uropods (unlike Flabellifera, Anthuridea and Valvifera)

Those of you who counted will notice that the four characters listed exclude only 5 of the 8 other suborders. Of the three remaining the Oniscoidea are terrestrial, the Phreatoicoidea are freshwater, and the Microcerberidea are interstitial. Only the microcerberids could be confused with the asellotes. They are, however, all very long and thin (7x body width or more) and very small (max at 1.4mm total length). These characters do not occur together in the asellotes.

The suborder has representatives world-wide in depths from the intertidal to the abyss. Figure 1 gives you an idea of what percentage of the total isopod fauna the asellotes represent in four different areas of the globe. Although the shallow water percentages vary widely from place to place, in deep water the asellotes are clear dominants world-wide. Menzies (1962) attributes this largely to their deposit feeding habits.

There has been little agreement on the taxonomy at and above the family level within this group. The scheme presented here is that of Wolff (1962) with some small changes to accomodate more recent discoveries. Other useful discussions can be found in Menzies (1962), McLaughlin (1980), Menzies, George & Rowe (1973), Schultz (1969), and Hessler (1969).

1970

1971

1972

1973

1974

1975

Suborder Asellota

Superfamily Stenetroidae

Family Stenetriidae

Stenetrium sp. A of MBC

Superfamily Janiroidea (Paraselloidea of Wolff 1962)

Family Antiasidae

Antias hirsutus Menzies 1951

Family Dendrotionidae

Acanthomunna tannerensis Schultz 1966

Family Desmosomatidae

Momedossa symmetrica (Schultz 1966)

Desmosoma symmetrica Schultz 1966

Prochelator sp. A of MBC

Desmosoma sp. A of MBC

Family Eurycopidae

Eurycope californiensis Schultz 1966

Eurycope sp. A of MBC

Munneurycope sp.

Munnopsurus giganteus ochotensis Gurjanova 1933

Munnopsurus sp. A of MBC

Family Ilyarachnidae

Ilyarachna acarina Menzies & Barnard 1959

Ilyarachna profunda Schultz 1966

Family Jaeropsidae

Jaeropsis concaua Schultz 1966

Jaeropsis dubia dubia Menzies 1951

Jaeropsis dubia paucispina Menzies 1951

Jaeropsis cf. lata Kussakin 1961

Jaeropsis lobata Richardson 1899

Jaeropsis setosa George & Strömberg 1968

Jaeropsis sp. B of MBC

Family Janiridae

Caecianiroopsis psammophila Menzies & Pettit 1956

Jais californica (Richardson 1904)

Janiroopsis analoga Menzies 1952

Janiroopsis epilittoralis Menzies 1952

Janiroopsis kincaidi kincaidi Richardson 1904

Janiroopsis kincaidi derjugini Gurjanova 1933

Janiroopsis magnocula Menzies 1952

Family Janiridae (cont.)

- Janiroopsis minuta Menzies 1952
- Janiroopsis montereyensis Menzies 1952
- Janiroopsis tridens Menzies 1952
- Janiralata davisii Menzies 1951
- Janiralata erostrata Richardson 1899
- Janiralata occidentalis (Walker 1898)
- Janiralata rajata Menzies 1951
- Janiralata solasteri (Hatch 1947)
- Janiralata triangulata (Richardson 1899)

Family Munnidae

- Munna chromatocephala Menzies 1952
- Munna halei Menzies 1952
- Munna magnifica Schultz 1964
- Munna spinifrons Menzies & Barnard 1959
- Munna stephensi Gurjanova 1933
- Munna ubiquita Menzies 1952
- Munna sp. A of MBC

Family Nannoniscidae

- Nannonisconus latipleonus Schultz 1966

Family Parasellidae

- Coecijaera horvathi Menzies 1951

Family Pleurocopidae

- Pleurocope sp. A of MBC

Family Paramunnidae

- Munnogonium erratum Schultz 1961
- Munnogonium tillerae (Menzies & Barnard 1959)
M. waldronensis George & Strömberg 1968
- Paramunna quadratifrons Iverson & Wilson 1981
- Pleurogonium californiense Menzies 1951
- Pleurogonium rubicundum (G.O. Sars 1864)