

Gloria Maris	50 ( 3-4 )	66 - 70	Antwerpen, juni 2011
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**225093**

**A new *Mitrella* (Gastropoda: Neogastropoda: Columbellidae)  
from the western Mediterranean Sea**

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**Keywords:** GASTROPODA, NEOGASTROPODA, COLUMBELLIDAE, *Mitrella*, *Mitrella gervillei*, *Mitrella swinnyi*, Mediterranean Sea, new species.

**Abstract:** *Mitrella swinnyi* sp. nov. from the western part of the Mediterranean Sea is described and compared with *Mitrella gervillei* (Payraudeau, 1826), its closest congener and at the same time the species it has until now been confused with. Some remarks about the infrasubspecific *M. decollata* form *caralitana* Schiro, 1978 are added.

**Introduction:** The genus *Mitrella* Risso, 1826 within the Mediterranean region is a well-studied group of species. Within this group, *Mitrella gervillei* is a well-known shallow water species (0.5-20m), which has been subject of several surveys (Schiro, 1978; Schiro, 1979; Sabelli & Spada, 1981; Luque, 1986; Chiarelli, Micali & Quadri, 2003). Yet, during our recent study of several samples and literature citing this species, we came to the conclusion that the taxon *M. gervillei* is in fact used for a species complex, probably consisting of four distinct species: *M. gervillei*, *M. swinnyi* sp. nov. (described below), the species described as *M. decollata* form *caralitana* Schiro, 1978, and probably a fourth species as figured in Sabelli & Spada (1981): fig. 3C. Unfortunately, we cannot discuss the actual status of the two last ones due to a lack of material to be designated as types.

**Abbreviations:**

MNHN: Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, France.

FS: private collection Frank Swinnen, Lommel, Belgium.

KM: private collection Kevin Monsecour, Aarschot, Belgium.

**Systematics:**

Family **COLUMBELLIDAE** Swainson, 1840

Subfamily *Atiliinae* Cossmann, 1901

Genus *Mitrella* Risso, 1826

Type species by subsequent designation (Cox, 1927): *Mitrella flaminea* Risso, 1826. Recent, Mediterranean.

*Mitrella swinneni* sp. nov.

Figs 1-3, 7-8

*Mitrella gervillei* (Payraudeau, 1826) – Chiarelli, Micali & Quadri, 2003, fig. 18-21

**Type locality:** Marbella, Malaga, Spain. 70-90m deep.

**Type material:** Holotype, MNHN 23795, 17.8 x 7.2mm.

Paratype 1 (type locality), KM, 16.9mm; Paratype 2-3 (Gibraltar Strait, Mediterranean, Morocco), FS, 16.2-18.5mm; Paratype 4 (same locality), KM, 18.3mm; Paratype 5 (Cape Corse, Corsica), KM, 15.2mm.

**Distribution:** Western Mediterranean Sea. Known from the Alboran Sea (see type series), Corsica (Paratype 5), Sardinia and Sicily, Italy (Chiarelli, Micali & Quadri, 2003).

**Description:** Shell rather large for the genus, adult size 14.0-18.5 mm; fusiform, bulbously elongate. Teleoconch consisting of about 5 slightly bulbous whorls (adult specimens always with decollate protoconch). Protoconch (based on Chiarelli, Micali & Quadri, 2003: fig. 19) multispiral, consisting of 2-3 whorls. Teleoconch without axial sculpture, apart from minute growth lines. Spiral sculpture consisting of two faint incisions just below the suture, markedly present on upper teleoconch whorls and

diminishing in strength towards the final whorl and 20-24 basal cords, ventrally ranging until the adapical end of the columella and dorsally until mid-whorl, 2-3 most adapical ones much shallower than abapical ones. Suture slightly impressed. Outer lip thickened, smooth, apart from continuations of the basal cords. Inner lip with 10-12 denticles. Columellar callus marked by a distinct rim, yet not seriously thickened. Columella with 2-3 abapical denticles. Siphonal canal short, open, straight.

Shell colour: Teleoconch whorls creamy to pale orange, sometimes adorned with a pattern of white and pale brown blotches. Aperture and columella off-white.

**Comparison:** *M. swinneni* can only be confused with *M. gervillei*, from which it can easily be distinguished by the larger number of basal cords, the position of the basal cords (ranging up to the adapical end of the columella, whereas they do not extend beyond mid-columellar height in *M. gervillei*), the subsutural spiral incisions (smooth in *M. gervillei*) and the smaller number and position of the columellar denticles (only 2-3 adapical denticles in *M. swinneni*, whereas *M. gervillei* shows 5-6 denticles ranging until mid-columellar height). Moreover, both species have a different bathymetrical range: *M. gervillei* is a shallow-water dweller (0.5-20m), whereas *M. swinneni* lives in deeper water (70-90m).

**Remark:** According to its original description, the taxon "*M. decollata* form *caralitana*", is characterised by convex spiral whorls, a somewhat sunken suture, a slightly globose body whorl, a longer canal, a more thickened outer lip, fewer teeth (8-9), almost obsolete columellar folds, a smaller size and a straw-coloured shell. The typical characteristics of the columella, the number of teeth on the outer lip, the overall different shape of the shell (heavier, thicker, more rounded whorls) and the bathymetrical range (deep water) serve to distinguish this species from *M. gervillei*. However, the name *caralitana* cannot be used as valid, according to the rules of the ICZN (ICZN 45.6.3: "it is deemed to be infrasubspecific if it was first published after 1960 and the author expressly used one of the terms "variety" or "form" (including use of the terms "var.", "forma", "v." and "f.")). As we do not have material available for type designation and were not able to trace Schiro's specimens, we refrain from introducing a new name for this species.

"*M. decollata* form *caralitana*" differs from *M. swinneni* sp. nov. by the lower number of denticles in the outer lip, the position of the basal cords (until mid-columellar height), the absence of the subsutural cords, the smaller size and the heavier and thicker shell.

**Etymology:** The species is named after Frank Swinnen (Lommel, Belgium) for his

contributions to the knowledge of the European molluscan fauna. He also made his collection available for study.

**Acknowledgements:** We would like to thank Frank Swinnen for the loan of material. André Verhecken (Belgium) kindly revised the manuscript.

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**Plate:**

**1-3, 7-8: *Mitrella swinneni* sp.nov.**

**1-3:** Holotype. Spain. Malaga. Marbella. 17.8mm.

**7:** Paratype 3. Morocco. Mediterranean. Gibraltar Strait. 18.5mm.

**8:** Paratype 5. Corsica. Cape Corse. 15.2mm.

**4-6, 9: *Mitrella gervillei* (Payraudeau, 1826)**

**4-6:** Spain. Malaga. 16.6mm. Coll. KM.

**9:** Spain. Algericas. 14.6mm. Coll. KM.



