



A new species of *Rhopalorhynchus* (Pycnogonida: Colossendeidae) from Lizard Island, North Queensland, Australia

DAVID A. STAPLES

Museum Victoria, GPO Box 666, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia. E-mail: dstaples@museum.vic.gov.au

Abstract

A new species of pycnogonid of the genus *Rhopalorhynchus* Wood-Mason, 1873 is described from the shallow waters of Lizard Island, north Queensland, increasing the number of *Rhopalorhynchus* species from Queensland to three. One female and two males were collected from coral rubble sortings gathered by hand dredge. The new species is compared with its congeners and the status of *R. gracillimus* Carpenter, 1907 is reviewed. Variability in *R. tenuissimus* (Haswell, 1884) is recorded.

Key words: Pycnogonida, *Rhopalorhynchus*, North Queensland, Lizard I

Introduction

Among pycnogonids collected by participants in the first CReefs Australian expedition funded by the Australian resources company, BHP Billiton was a new species of *Rhopalorhynchus* Wood-Mason, 1873. This genus is most often collected in tropical waters in association with corals, coral rubble, sponges and sandy sediments. The new species is the third *Rhopalorhynchus* recorded from Queensland waters and the seventh belonging to the brevitarsal group of the genus (Stock, 1958: 117). This group consists of species where the terminal claw is at most half as long as the propodus and the tarsal ratio (ratio between tibia 2 and tarsus + propodus + claw = 45–70%). Other species in this group are: *R. pedunculatus* Stock, 1957 (Red Sea, about 27 m); *R. clavipes* Carpenter, 1893. (Off Murray I., Torres Strait; Coral Sea; southern Queensland 27–138 m); *R. mortenseni* Stock, 1958, (Off Jolo, Philippines, Coral Sea, 46 m–55 m); *R. claudus* Stock, 1974 (Barbados, 100 m); *R. filipes* Stock, 1991 (Coral Sea; Tiger I., Indonesia. 60–320 m) and *R. gracillimus* Carpenter, 1907 (Maldives Is., Indian Ocean, no depth data).

In addition to describing the new species, the status of specimens assigned to *R. gracillimus* is reviewed. Based on material gathered during earlier surveys at Gladstone, Queensland, additional variability is recorded in the longitarsal species *R. tenuissimus*. Specimens have been lodged in the Queensland Museum, Brisbane (QM) and Museum Victoria, Melbourne (NMV).

Family Colossendeidae Hoek, 1881

Genus *Rhopalorhynchus* Wood-Mason, 1873

Rhopalorhynchus magdalena sp. nov.

Figures 1, 2.

Material examined. Holotype: North Qld., Lizard I. (14° 61.061'S, 145° 15.365'E), 15 m, amongst coral