

The Caprellidea (Crustacea: Amphipoda) from Mauritius Island, Western Indian Ocean

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Abstract

The caprellidean fauna of Mauritius was investigated. Sixteen stations were selected around the island and different substrata (including algae, seagrass, sponges, hydroids, ascidians, echinoderms, encrusted dead corals, coral rubble, fine and coarse sediments) were sampled. The study reports seven species in six genera, five of which are new records for the island and one, *Metaprotella mauritiensis* is described as new to science. *Metaprotella sandalensis* Mayer, 1898 was the most common species in the coral reef system surrounding Mauritius.

Key words: Crustacea, Amphipoda, Caprellidea, systematics, new species, Mauritius

Introduction

There have been few investigations on the Caprellidea of the southern and western Indian Ocean. Recently, Laubitz (1995) studied the caprellid material of the French Expedition collections from the southern and western Indian Ocean islands of St Paul and Amsterdam, Réunion, Mayotte and Agalega, along with small collections from Madagascar. She found 21 species of caprellid of which seven were new to the region, and another seven were new to science, including four new genera. Larsen (1997) described a new species of the genus *Metaprotella* Mayer, 1890 from Zanzibar Island.

The lack of studies in the Western Indian Ocean is specially significant in Mauritius Island. Studies on the amphipod fauna of Mauritius are sparse, dating back to the 19th century when Templeton (1836) gave brief morphological descriptions of a few species. He described *Caprella scaura*, the only caprellid species which has been recorded so far at Mauritius Island (McCain & Steinberg, 1970). Since Templeton's (1836) contribution amphipod studies in Mauritius had been exclusively focused on the Gammaridea. Ledoyer