

A description of a new species of *Typhlotanais* (Crustacea: Tanaidacea) from West Antarctic with a note on the genus

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Abstract

The male and female of *Typhlotanais grahami* n. sp., from shallow waters (2–120 m) in Admiralty Bay (South Shetland Islands, the Antarctic) are described. The revision of *Typhlotanais sensu lato* is currently underway, and there are enough shared characters to place the new species in the same genus. The female of the new species is characterized by (1) a smooth carapace, as long as it is wide; (2) pereonites smoothly rounded laterally; (3) a rounded pleotelson; (4) an undulated, smooth, spineless mandible molar process; (5) nine terminal spiniform setae (two are fused together) on the maxillule; (6) a chela (propodus) of similar size to the carpus, and twice as long as it is wide; (7) a reduced proximal seta on the pleopodal endopod; (8) a uropod exopodite with one article, about 2/3 of the endopodal length, which is longer distally with a large basal part and a bend about a quarter of the way along its length.

Key words: Tanaidacea, Nototanaidae, *Typhlotanais*, Admiralty Bay, Antarctic

Introduction

Tanaidacea belong to a poorly understood group of crustaceans, and many new taxa within the order are still being described. The order has been neglected in most biological surveys owing to the small body size (usually 2–3 mm) of its members. The use of improved sampling methods appropriate to small macrobenthic or meiobenthic invertebrates has revealed their extremely high density, reaching as much as 146,000 indiv./m² (Delillie *et al.* 1985), indicating that they are an important component of the zoobenthos on continental slopes and abyssal plains (Gardiner 1975, Gage & Tyler 1991). Preliminary ecological research indicates that they play an important role in various benthic assemblages and in the evaluation of marine biodiversity (Gallardo *et al.* 1977, Richardson & Hedgpeth 1977, Błażewicz-Paszkowycz & Jażdżewski 2000) owing to their fast turnover and recolonization rate (Bird & Holdich 1989, Larsen personal communication).