

First occurrence of the genus *Paraleucilla* (Calcarea, Porifera) in the Atlantic Ocean: *P. magna* sp. nov.

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Abstract

We describe the first species of the genus *Paraleucilla* Dendy 1892 from the Atlantic Ocean. *P. magna* sp. nov. is characterized by the presence of triactines composing the atrial skeleton and the absence of giant diactines, which are characteristic of *P. cucumis* (Haeckel 1872), a species from Australia, the only known *Paraleucilla* that also presents atrial triactines. *P. magna* sp. nov. is the most abundant calcareous sponge in Rio de Janeiro State (Brazil), and shows a strong seasonality, disappearing in autumn.

Key words: Calcarea, *Paraleucilla*, *Paraleucilla magna*, Atlantic

Introduction

The genus *Paraleucilla* was originally described by Dendy in 1892 as *P. cucumis* (Haeckel 1872), a species from Bass Strait and Gulf of St. Vincent (Australia). The original diagnosis of the genus was:

“Chambers spherical or sac-shaped (?). Beneath the dermal cortex a series of subdermal cavities supported by an outer and inner layer of quadriradiates whose apical rays cross each other in opposite directions. Beneath this comes the chamber layer, whose skeleton consists of irregularly arranged quadriradiates. Large, longitudinally arranged oxea occur between the triradiates of the dermal cortex.”

Dendy abandoned the genus in 1893, saying that he had unnecessarily proposed it for *Leucandra cucumis* Haeckel 1872, a species from Australia and Sri Lanka “which is char-