

Interstitial water mites of Argentina: *Omartacarus* Cook (Omartacaridae) and *Meramecia* Cook (Limnesiidae) (Acari: Hydrachnidia)

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Abstract

A male exemplar identified as *Omartacarus brevipalpis* Cook, collected in Tucuman (Argentina), is reassigned to *O. tucumanensis* Fernández, as is the nymph described by Cook in 1980 near the type locality of *O. tucumanensis*. New distributional data are presented for *Omartacarus* and *Meramecia* (*Submeramecia*) *diamphida* Cook. *Meramecia saltensis* Fernández is assigned to the subgenus *Parameramecia*, where it is the second species at the present.

Key words: Hyporheic, *Parameramecia*, *Submeramecia*, stygobiotic, wide distributions

Introduction

The stygobiotic (sensu Gibert et al. 1994) water mites in South America and especially in Argentina are richer than previously expected (Cook, 1980, 1988). The diversity of this interesting group of mites is far from completely known, as recent sampling in river floodplains is revealing many new forms (Fernández, 1987, 1988, 1993, 2001, Fernández and Palacios, 1989, Fernández and Grosso, 1991).

The family Omartacaridae was proposed by Cook (1980) to accommodate the genera *Omartacarus* and *Maharashtracarus*. Unlike most families of water mites, in which species can be found in surficial and hyporheic water, species of Omartacaridae (and other five families), are exclusively interstitial (Di Sabatino et al. 2000). Within the Limnesiidae, the subfamily Neomamersinae currently includes three genera (*Meramecia*, *Neomamersa* and *Arizonacarus*) whose relationships and characteristics were discussed by Smith and Cook (1994). These authors concluded that this South American group is diversified from gondwanic ancestors.