

Melitids (Crustacea: Amphipoda) of the genera *Ceradocus* and *Mallacoota* from Rodrigues Island (Indian Ocean)

CHANDANI APPADOO^{1*} & ALAN A. MYERS²

¹Department of Biosciences, Faculty of Science, University of Mauritius, Réduit, Mauritius.

²Department of Zoology, Ecology and Plant Science, National University of Ireland Cork, Lee Maltings, Prospect Row, Cork, Ireland.

*Corresponding author

Abstract

The present work represents a pioneer study on the family Melitidae from Rodrigues, Indian Ocean. Taxonomic descriptions and drawings are given for four new species of melitids namely *Ceradocus shoalsi* **sp. nov.**, *C. cotonensis* **sp. nov.**, *C. oliveri* **sp. nov.** and *Mallacoota magnimerus* **sp. nov.** A key to the *Ceradocus* species of the Mascarene Islands is provided. *Mallacoota insignis* (Chevreux) is reported for the first time from Rodrigues.

Key words: Amphipods, Rodrigues Island, Taxonomy

Introduction

Rodrigues together with Mauritius and Reunion is part of the Mascarene Islands. In recent years, several works have been carried out on the taxonomy of melitids of the Mascarene Islands, including the Mauritius Island (Appadoo *et al.*, 2002a,b, Appadoo & Myers, 2003, 2005). However studies on melitid amphipods of Rodrigues are non-existent. In 2001, the first marine biodiversity workshop from the Rodrigues Island was carried out (Oliver & Holmes, 2004) where the amphipod fauna was studied for the first time.

For the melitid genus *Ceradocus*, three species have been reported from Mauritius, *C. greeni* Appadoo and Myers (2005), *C. hawaiiensis* J.L. Barnard (1955) and *C. mahafalensis* var. *incisa* Ledoyer (1978). *Mallacoota* species are more diverse in Mauritius with five species reported by Appadoo *et al.* (2002b). The current study describes melitids of the genera *Ceradocus* and *Mallacoota* from Rodrigues following the marine biodiversity workshop.