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Mantacaprella macaronensis, a new genus and species of Caprellidae (Crustacea: Amphipoda) from Canary Islands and Cape Verde

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Abstract

Mantacaprella macaronensis new genus, new species, is described based on specimens collected from Canary Islands and Cape Verde. *Mantacaprella* is close to the genera *Pariambus*, *Pseudolirius*, *Propodalirius* and *Paracaprella*, but can be distinguished by the combination of the following characteristics: pereopods 3, 4 and 5 two-articulate; pereopods 6 and 7 six-articulate; mandibular molar present and palp absent; male abdomen with a pair of well-developed appendages. The new species has been found living in *Cymodocea nodosa* meadows and *Caulerpa prolifera* beds from 8.8 to 14.6 m depth in Gran Canaria (Canary Islands), and in natural rocky and artificial habitats (shipwrecks) at 25 m in Sal Island (Cape Verde). Even though the new species is one of the dominant amphipods inhabiting meadows of *Cymodocea nodosa* in Gran Canaria and in Cape Verde, it had not been described so far. This reflects the lack of knowledge on Macaronesian invertebrates, such as amphipods, and the need of further taxonomical studies to better characterise the whole biodiversity of this region and to design adequate programmes of management and conservation.

Key words: Caprellid, Macaronesia, *Cymodocea nodosa*, *Caulerpa prolifera*, natural hard substrata, artificial hard substrata

Introduction

According to Spalding *et al.* (2007) Marine Ecoregions are areas of relatively homogeneous species composition, clearly distinct from adjacent systems. The species composition is likely to be determined by the predominance of a small number of habitats and/or a distinct suite of oceanographic or topographic features. The dominant biogeographic forcing agents defining the ecoregions vary from location to location, but may include isolation, upwelling, nutrient inputs, freshwater influx, temperature regimes, ice regimes, exposure, sediments, currents, and bathymetric or coastal complexity (Spalding *et al.*, 2007).

The Macaronesian region sensu lato includes the Azores, Madeira, Salvage Islands, Canary Islands and Cape Verde. The islands are separated from the European and African continents by waters of depth exceeding 2000 m (Bamber 2012). During the last decade, new amphipod species have been described from this region (Guerra-García 2004, Krapp Schickel and Takeuchi 2005, Bellan-Santini 2007, Rubal and Larsen 2013), probably due to the scarce knowledge about the region and the paucity of studies. Furthermore, caprellid fauna from sediments and seagrasses is still scarcely explored (González *et al.*, 2008; Guerra-García *et al.*, 2013). In fact, even in regions where amphipod fauna has been widely studied, such as the Mediterranean Sea, new caprellids are still being described. For instance, a new caprellid was recently found within a *Posidonia oceanica* meadow from Sardinia, Italy (Sturaro and Guerra-García 2012).

Cape Verde was recognised as one of the 10 marine biodiversity hot-spots most threatened by species extinction (Roberts *et al.*, 2002), encouraging the development of several studies with conservation purposes. As a

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