ORIGINAL PAPER

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On two new species of Oswaldella Stechow, 1919 (Cnidaria, Hydrozoa) from Bransfield Strait (Antarctica)

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Abstract Two species of the genus Oswaldella Stechow, 1919 new to science (Oswaldella crassa sp. nov. and O. curiosa sp. nov.) were studied. Both species are described and figured; their systematic position amongst the remaining species of the genus is discussed. The material originates from the Bransfield Strait area (Antarctica) and was collected during the United States Antarctic Research Program with R.V. Eltanin. A comparative table listing the main features of the known species of Oswaldella is presented. Finally, a general survey of geographical and bathymetrical distribution of the known species of Oswaldella is given.

Introduction

During the last few years the list of known species of the genus Oswaldella Stechow, 1919 has increased considerably, making this genus one of the hydroid genera best represented in the antarctic benthic ecosystem. Before El Beshbeeshy’s paper of 1991, which added three new species, only four species were known. Over the last 3 years, however, the study of the material collected during several French, German and Spanish antarctic expeditions, and the revision of old material, resulted in the discovery of 12 species new to science (cf. Peña Cantero et al. 1995; Peña Cantero and Vervoort 1996, 1997; Peña Cantero et al. 1997).

In this paper we present the first results of the study of the huge hydroid material of the U.S.A.R.P. (United States Antarctic Research Program), collected over many years by several American antarctic expeditions, upon which study has recently been started. Amongst the many species present, we found two species of the genus Oswaldella Stechow, 1919 that we consider new to science and that are described below as Oswaldella crassa sp. nov. and Oswaldella curiosa sp. nov.

Materials and methods

The material examined comes from the Bransfield Strait area (Antarctica) and was collected during U.S.A.R.P. with R.V. Eltanin in the austral summer of 1962/1963.

Andriashev (1964) and Picken (1985) are followed in considering the northern limit of the pack ice as the most valid limit for the antarctic benthic ecosystem.

The type series specimens have been deposited in the collections of the Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum (National Museum of Natural History), Leiden, The Netherlands (registration numbers indicated by RMNH Coel. and a number) and in the collections of the National Museum of Natural History (Smithsonian Institution), Washington, DC (with registration numbers as USNM and a number).

Results and discussion

Description of the species

Oswaldella crassa sp. nov. (Fig. 1)

Material examined. ELTANIN 006-428, 5 January 1963, 62°41'–62°39'S, 57°51'–57°46'W, 662–1120 m, three stem fragments, 32, 25 and 15 mm high (the last two belonging to the same stem), with immature gonothecae (holotype, USNH no. 97230; paratype, RMNH-coel. 27851; slide 4031).