

NOTES AND COMMENTS

This new section of the Brazilian Journal of Biology is intended to provide space for short scientific notes and relevant information, in Biological Sciences.

MARINE LEECH, *Stibarobdella macrothela* (SCHMARDA, 1861) (HIRUDINEA, PISCICOLIDAE), PARASITIC ON THE WHALER SHARK, *Carcharhinus brachyurus* (GÜNTHER, 1870) (CHONDRICHTHYES, CARCHARHINIDAE), IN SOUTHERN BRAZILIAN WATERS

SOTO, J. M. R.

Museu Oceanográfico do Vale do Itajaí, MOVI, Universidade do Vale do Itajaí, UNIVALI, Rua Uruguai, 458, C.P. 360, CEP 88302-202, Itajaí, SC, Brazil

Correspondence to: Jules Marcelo Rosa Soto, Museu Oceanográfico do Vale do Itajaí, MOVI, Universidade do Vale do Itajaí, UNIVALI, Rua Uruguai, 458, C.P. 360, CEP 88302-202, Itajaí, SC, Brazil

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(With 1 figure)

ABSTRACT

The presence of the sea leech, *Stibarobdella macrothela* (Schmarda, 1861) (Hirudinea, Piscicolidae), is marked in the south coast of Brazil, based on the single specimen with 67 mm (CT), collected in the intergill ventral region of a whaler shark, *Carcharhinus brachyurus* (Günther, 1870) (Chondrichthyes, Carcharhinidae), adult male with about 2 m (CT), being treated of the first registrations of *S. macrothela* in the Southwest Atlantic and the parasitic association with *C. brachyurus*.

Key words: *Stibarobdella macrothela*, *Carcharhinus brachyurus*, Hirudinea, Chondrichthyes, ectoparasitism.

RESUMO

A sanguessuga marinha, *Stibarobdella macrothela* (Schmarda, 1861) (Hirudinea, Piscicolidae), parasita do tubarão-baleeiro, *Carcharhinus brachyurus* (Günther, 1870) (Chondrichthyes, Carcharhinidae), em águas do sul do Brasil

Neste estudo é assinalada a presença da sanguessuga marinha, *Stibarobdella macrothela* (Schmarda, 1861) (Hirudinea, Piscicolidae), na costa sul do Brasil, com base em um único espécime de 67 mm (CT), coletado na região ventral interbranquial de um tubarão-baleeiro, *Carcharhinus brachyurus* (Günther, 1870) (Chondrichthyes, Carcharhinidae), macho-adulto, com cerca de 2 m (CT); tratando-se dos primeiros registros de *S. macrothela* no sudoeste do Atlântico e de associação parasitária com *C. brachyurus*.

Palavras-chave: *Stibarobdella macrothela*, *Carcharhinus brachyurus*, Hirudinea, Chondrichthyes, ectoparasitismo.

Marine leeches of the Brazilian waters are still relatively unstudied. The unique consistent work was made by Ringuelet (1944) that include hirudineans of the Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. On April 1995, a adult, male, whaler shark (~ 2 m TL), *Carcharhinus brachyurus* (Günther, 1870), was captured by longliners off Santa Catarina coast, southern Brazil, approximately 26°45'S, 48°15'W. On the intergill ventral region of this specimen was observed a leech, that

was collected and stored on the Museu Oceanográfico do Vale do Itajaí (MOVI 10838) (Fig. 1).

The species was identified as *Stibarobdella macrothela* (Schmarda, 1861) (Clitellata, Piscicolidae, Ichthyobdellinae), a typical leech that ectoparasite elasmobranchs, based on dichotomous key showing by Sawyer *et al.* (1975) and some other particular characters presented by the same author. The specimen is characterized by body without conspicuous branchiae; no such pulsatile

vesicles along lateral margins; tegument with large wart-like tubercles, rounded or pointed; triannulate segment in abdominal region; primary tubercles numbering ten on middle annulus; oral sucker with tentacles (papillae); one pair of eyespots; no marginal fringe; and caudal sucker relatively large,

at least two to three times the diameter of the oral sucker. The color is reddish (fresh) or cream (fixed in alcohol 70%). Measurements (mm): total length, 67; diameter of the caudal sucker, 12; diameter of the oral sucker, 5; maximum body width, 14; and maximum body height, 9.

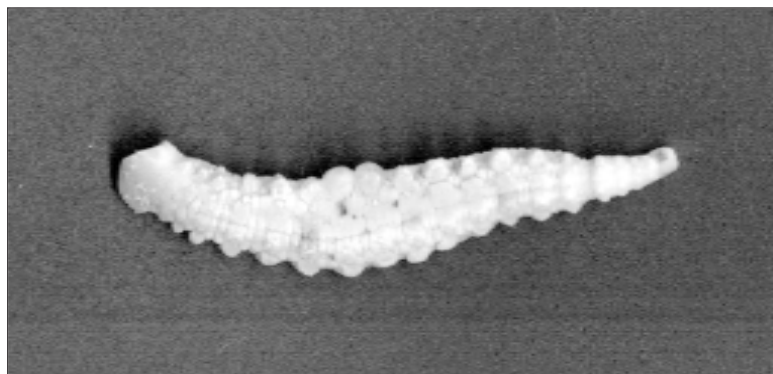


Fig. 1 — *Stibarobdella macrothela*, MOVI 10838 (67 mm TL) collected on the intergill ventral region of the *Carcharhinus brachyurus*, off Santa Catarina coast, southern Brazil, approximately 26°45'S, 48°15'W.

The spectrum of the fish hosts include: *Ginglymostoma cirratum*, *Carcharhinus falci-formis*, *C. leucas*, *C. limbatus*, *C. obscurus*, *C. springeri* (= *C. perezii*), *C. longimanus*, *Negaprion brevirostris*, *Galeocerdo cuvier*, *Sphyrna mokarran*, *S. tudes*, guitarfish (*Rhinobatidae*) and *Paralichthys dentatus* (= *Chaenopsetta ocellaris*) (Sawyer, 1967; Sawyer *et al.*, 1975; Williams Jr., 1982). The distribution is large, from circunglobal tropical waters (Llewellyn, 1966). In west Atlantic, *S. macrothela* was previously reported from North Carolina to Caribbean Sea.

The present work report the first record of *Stibarobdella macrothela* in the southwest Atlantic and a new host, *Carcharhinus brachyurus* for this marine leech.

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