

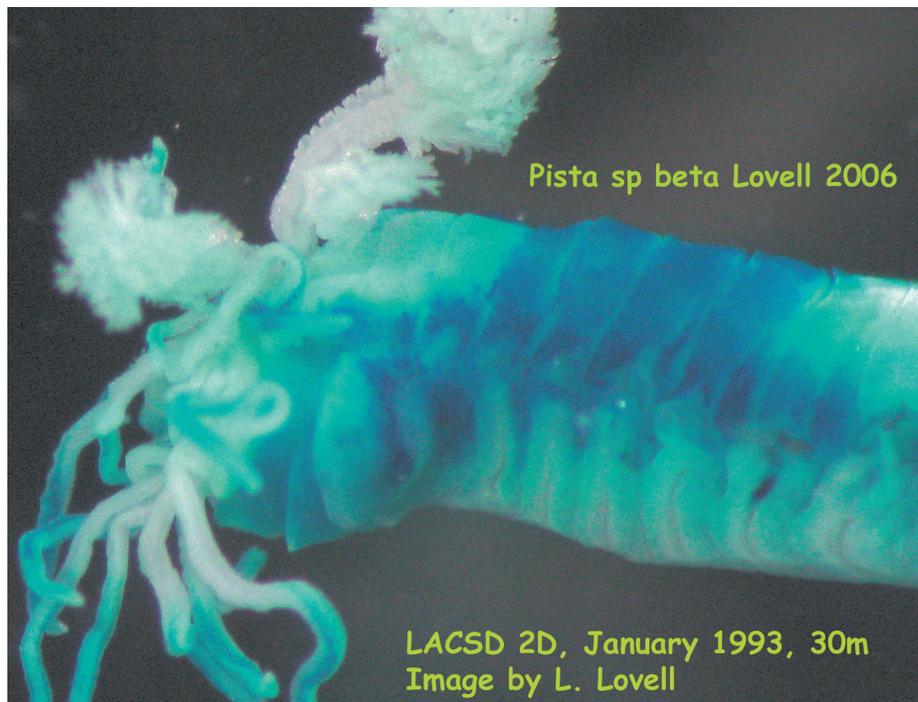
SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA
ASSOCIATION OF
MARINE
INVERTEBRATE
TAXONOMISTS



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SCAMIT Newsletter

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NOVEMBER 2006

On 17 November SCAMIT met in the Crustacea section of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. The guest speaker was Dr. Sammy de Grave of the Oxford Museum, who was visiting the section for his own research purposes, and agreed to meet with us to discuss decapods. In preparatory e-mails Don Cadien had laid out some of the problems which we had with decapods, including confused and provisional species. Items to be covered during the meeting were the provisionals *Ogyrides* sp A, *Salmoneus* sp A, *Automate* sp A, and the resolution of the *Neocrangon zacaе/resima* nomenclatural issue.

After our introductory business meeting Sammy began by giving us a powerpoint on Caridean shrimp worldwide. He presented the various families in the group, most of which unfortunately do not occur in our area. The breadth of morphology shown was substantial and very interesting. Most of the illustrated species and groups, however, were from the tropics. Following this we began to discuss the nature of variability within and between decapods. This was an attempt to discover if he had identified particularly stable or particularly variable character state sets that we might apply to our local species. Unfortunately he had no magic bullet characters that would always prove of value in separating related but different taxa. This was applied to the case of the local Neocrangonids, where the main separation practiced in the field has to do with the distribution of setae on the rostrum. Sammy seemed to think this was probably a valid, but not an invariable series of characters. He examined lots identified as *Neocrangon communis*, *Neocrangon zacaе*, and *Neocrangon resima* and recognized the same rostral setation differences we currently use. He also suggested that there were differences he could see, but not yet quantify, in the structure of the last few abdominal segments.

Jim Roney (CLAEMD) brought specimens of *Ogyrides* sp A, as did Carol Paquette (MBC) and Don Cadien (LACSD). All were examined and found to be a single coherent species differing from *Ogyrides alphaerostris* as interpreted by Sammy. Wicksten has maintained the identity of the local specimens as *alphaerostris*, a position disputed by Jim Roney, who finds consistent differences from that taxon. Jim passed around his draft manuscript description of this new species for our examination at the meeting. This lovely animal is only found in very shallow bottoms in wave influenced situations, where it lives in temporary burrows in the breaker-zone. Sammy was very enthused about the possibility of collecting some living material for live examination and fixation for molecular analysis. No ogyridids have yet been sequenced, and our local species seemed a candidate to be the first. Unfortunately, in subsequent collecting trips with Jody Martin, no live specimens were discovered and sampled.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

13 August - Lysianassoid amphipods with Don Cadien at LACSD.

September, date TBA - Holothuroids with Dr. Pawson at LACMNH.

15 October - TBD

1&2 November - (dates tentative) SAFIT/SCAMIT Hydrobid workshop at Weston Solutions; guest speaker - Dr. Hershler.

13 December (date tentative) - MorphBank presentation with Katia Sellman and Christmas Luncheon.



Examining the material of *Salmoneus* sp A brought in from Long Beach Harbor by Carol Paquette, Sammy was able to recognize the local specimens as the same as those reported by Wicksten from the Gulf of California as *S. ortmanni*. Based on the recent reevaluation of the genus by Art Anker, Sammy believes that they are not *ortmanni*, but an undescribed species native to the NEP. SCAMIT members had always assumed that this animal was introduced from the tropical Western Pacific, where a number of species occur. This is apparently not the case. The ephemeral population that occupied some portions of Long Beach Harbor prior to dying out, was probably inoculated from the south with northward flowing waters during a strong warm current (El Nino) flow.

Sammy agreed with Don Cadien's assessment of *Automate* sp A, finding the characters he used to separate it from the broadly distributed *Automate dolichognatha* appropriate and persuasive. Previous identifications of *A. dolichognatha* from the SCB were found to be based on incomplete specimens lacking some of the major characters needed for easy separation. Characters of the telson, maxilliped and scaphognathite can be used in place of the leg spination and chela characters missing in these specimens. Sammy and Don will work this animal up fully and publish it. The species continues to be taken in small numbers at a few sites off Palos Verdes, and enough material is in hand for the description.

Questions of character variability/stability/reliability kept popping up during the meeting, without eliciting any easy answers. Sammy pointed to studies of some European hippolytids that document extensive variability in a number of characters. We just have to use our instincts, and a bit of native caution, and not over-interpret unusual morphologies we encounter.

At the end of the meeting Sammy made an open request for any material of decapods from our area to flesh out the collections of the Cambridge Museum in this zoogeographic region. His primary interest remains in caridids, although other groups are also welcome. He will provide a shipping code for those who might wish to send material, but should be contacted via e-mail for instructions on how to proceed with the transfer. In thanks for his participation Cheryl Brantley put together a gift set of SCAMIT merchandise (cup, hat, shirt) which Don Cadien promptly forgot to bring to the meeting. It is awaiting a future visit from Sammy, and another meeting.

- D. Cadien

DECEMBER 2006

The December SCAMIT meeting was a combination of business and pleasure, as normally we reserve December as more of a social meeting than actual work, but this year we did a little of both. It was held at the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts' facility. We had a general topics meeting in the morning and then sat down to a wonderful lunch financially provided for by SCAMIT, but organized and delivered by Cheryl Brantley and Larry Lovell

Since there were so many SCAMIT members present we started the morning with the "name game" where we went around the room and each of us introduced ourselves and stated which agency we worked for and our specialties. Once the introductions were complete the business portion started with Lisa Haney (LACSD) giving us an update on the impending State Sediment Quality Objectives program. If and when the new Sediment Quality Objectives go into effect it will mean more benthic infauna identification work will be needed. The program will require additional sediment sampling and analysis from major dischargers and probably for companies generating EIR's, etc. This is good and bad. It's good in that more work and job security are



always nice concepts, but bad in that the number of competent, available marine invertebrate taxonomists is dwindling.

This led to the very next topic which was started by Rick Rowe (CSD). He brought up the idea of SCAMIT providing a certification service for marine invertebrate taxonomy. This idea has surfaced previously and has been discussed in more detail since. Rick stated that there is a need for “knowledge standards” as it were. We can share our knowledge and in doing so, raise the bar for taxonomic identification work. We are hoping that within the next year a Certification Committee will be developed by SCAMIT in order to spearhead this project. Megan Lilly has offered to discuss a cooperative program with San Diego State University as they just opened a new lab/classroom across the parking lot from the CSD marine lab. Taxonomic certification already exists in the world of fresh water taxonomists and it is time for the marine world to follow suit.

The next hot topic was whether or not SCAMIT should try to standardize the way in which provisional species names are created among various participating taxonomists. A debate arose with different people having preferred methods and their justifications for such methods. For example, some people prefer to use a provisional name which includes the taxonomist’s initials, such as *Octopus* sp MBL1 (since I’m typing the minutes, I get to pick the genus...). Others argued that there are too many taxonomists now between people at the different agencies and all the consultants and that unless someone was familiar with everyone’s initials, this could get confusing. They argued in favor of using the agency for which one works. For example: *Octopus* CSD1 (CSD = City of San Diego). The independent consultants would simply use the initials of whatever company/agency was hiring them for the project in which the animal was sampled. However, the hitch in that plan was that many agencies, such as Weston Solutions, Inc, have multiple projects that a taxonomist will work on, and just naming an animal *Octopus* sp Weston1, doesn’t give any information as to which project it came from, i.e., date, location etc. Therefore, there were those that argued that the provisional species name should contain some type of locale information, such as, *Octopus* sp Catalina1. The discussion continued around in circles, and we even came up with a combined protocol. So, for instance, if Rick Rowe, found an *Octopus* sp at Catalina Island while working for Weston, the species name would be something like: *Octopus* sp RRWestonCatalina1. Obviously that caused some laughter as the name becomes too long and cumbersome. I would like to report here that a consensus was reached, but such was not the case. For now, it was left that people will continue to name their provisional species as they see fit, with the one exception that technically, letter designations should NOT be used as they are then open to confusion with valid “scamitized” provisional species. SCAMIT provisionals are always assigned a letter designation and this is done only after the appropriate requirements have been met. At the end of the discussion, the one thing that was agreed upon was a standard **format** for provisional species names, with regards to spacing, punctuation, etc. So, a taxonomist can use whatever combination of initials and numbers she/he desires, but the format should be: genus (space) sp (no period, space) provisional designation. For example: *Octopus* sp CSD1.

Dean Pasko (CSD) suggested we hold biannual (i.e., every 2 years) “working group” meetings for each of the various taxa, with the sole purpose being to discuss proposed provisional species. Such meetings would be for presenting/discussing provisional species under consideration by local specialists. Taxa found to be truly unique after being reviewed by fellow specialists, will be given a SCAMIT provisional designation at the meeting, with the descriptive material published in the subsequent newsletter. These meetings could also be used to consider changes to existing provisional taxa subsequent to their designation, and to verify the distribution of descriptive



materials (or reissue as appropriate), etc.

And with that, we adjourned for the afternoon to enjoy lunch and each other's company.

- M. Lilly

POLYCHAETES, POLYCHAETES, IN A DISH; HOW MANY PARAPODS DO YOU WISH?

To skip ahead to the present day for just a minute... The reader will find many polychaete voucher sheets attached at the end of this newsletter. The reason being, the deadline for submitting voucher sheets for species needing/wanting inclusion in the next Taxonomic Listing, ed. 5, is fast approaching. Some polychaete taxonomists have taken this to heart and have been madly producing voucher sheets. For those of you asleep at the wheel, there is still time. If you submit your voucher sheets to Megan Lilly prior to August 31st, she will include them with the next NL and they will be added to the new Taxonomic Listing.

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Dear SCAMIT members,

First, I want to thank past President Kelvin Barwick for his leadership during his tenure as President. He did a wonderful job and will be continuing to participate as the moderator of the Google Groups account. If you have not signed up yet, I encourage you to do so. Google Groups can work as a wonderful discussion tool for our members. The Annelid Group has been the most active to date. So if you are in another Group, don't be shy or a lurker, post a question or a down-sized image of a neat animal you wish to share.

I also want to thank the other officers, Vice-President Leslie Harris, Secretary Megan Lilly, and Treasurer Cheryl Brantley for their continued support by being officers again. And thanks to Don Cadien, who will continue his fine job as the Editor of the Newsletter. As anyone familiar with small volunteer organizations knows, many of the same individuals serve such organizations year after year, and all of the above are fine examples of that service and dedication. I encourage those of you in the local area that have not yet served to take the leap, step up, and give back to the organization in the future. For those of you who reside elsewhere, I encourage you to attend meetings and participate, if you travel to the area. If you have a research talk of interest, please come present it at a meeting. Feel free to contact Vice-President Leslie Harris, who is in charge of meeting speakers. Her contact information and those of the other officers is always located at the end of each Newsletter.

I look forward to serving as your President during this upcoming year. It is shaping up to be an exciting year. We have an opportunity to interact with a new sister organization, the Southwestern Association of Freshwater Invertebrate Taxonomists (SAFIT). We will be co-hosting a two-day workshop on hydrobid snails and the invasive New Zealand mud snail. The workshop will be lead by Smithsonian Curator, Dr. Robert Hershler. Watch for an announcement in the Newsletter and on the website for specific information about this meeting. It will be held at the offices of Weston Solutions, Inc. in Carlsbad, CA and is tentatively scheduled for the 1st and 2nd of November. In addition, Dr. Rich Mooi, Curator at the California Academy of Sciences will be leading July's meeting on irregular echinoids and Dr. Dave Pawson, Curator of Echinoderms at the Smithsonian, will be leading a meeting on holothurians in September. Membership is what drives SCAMIT and we want our members to be involved. If you have any questions about how you can participate or have questions about the organization, please contact me by phone at (310) 830-2400 X-5613 or via email at llovell@lacsdsd.org.

Sincerely,

Larry Lovell -President



Please visit the SCAMIT Website at: www.scamit.org

SCAMIT OFFICERS

If you need any other information concerning SCAMIT please feel free to contact any of the officers at their e-mail addresses:

President	Larry Lovell	(310)830-2400x5613	llovell@lacsds.org
Vice-President	Leslie Harris	(213)763-3234	lharris@nhm.org
Secretary	Megan Lilly	(619)758-2336	mlilly@sandiego.gov
Treasurer	Cheryl Brantley	(310)830-2400x5605	cbrantley@lacsds.org

Back issues of the newsletter are available. Prices are as follows:

Volumes 1 - 4 (compilation).....	\$ 30.00
Volumes 5 - 7 (compilation).....	\$ 15.00
Volumes 8 - 15	\$ 20.00/vol.

Single back issues are also available at cost.

The SCAMIT newsletter is published every two months and is distributed freely through the web site at www.scamit.org. Membership is \$15 for the electronic copy available via the web site and \$30 to receive a printed copy via USPS. Institutional membership, which includes a mailed printed copy, is \$60. All new members receive a printed copy of the most current edition of "A Taxonomic Listing of Soft Bottom Macro- and Megainvertebrates ... in the Southern California Bight." The current edition, the fourth, contains 2,067 species with partial synonyms. All correspondences can be sent to the Secretary at the email address above or to:

SCAMIT

C/O The Natural History Museum, Invertebrate Zoology

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