

**Benthic Infauna Identification Training: Annelida**  
**City of San Diego, Pt. Loma Ocean Monitoring Program**

Specimens: **Poecilochaetidae**

*Poecilochaetus* sp A

This is a small family of two genera of which one is represented in our fauna. The genus *Poecilochaetus* is recognizable by its long, forward directed setae on the first setiger. The prostomium is small with a thick, frontal **antenna** (long median facial lobe in Hartman, 1969). A long **nuchal tentacle** and a pair of **nuchal organs** are located immediately behind the prostomium. The parapodia are biramous with capillaries in the first three notopodia and thick, acicular spines in the neuropodia of setiger two and three. Capillary setae occupy both fascicles in the next approximately twenty segments. They are **spinose** in setigers seven to thirteen and **plumose** more posteriorly. *Poecilochaetus johnsoni* also has thick spines with **hirsute tips** in segments twenty two through forty six. The postsetal lobes are **flask shaped** in setigers seven to thirteen. More posterior segments have triangular podial lobes and cirri.

*Poecilochaetus johnsoni* was originally described from Mission Bay and may be found in shallow water. Some of the early deeper reports may have been confused with our other species. *Poecilochaetus* [sp A] <sup>martini</sup> is more common in our samples. It can be separated from *P. johnsoni* by its possession of retractile branchiae on the posterior surface of the parapodia after setiger fourteen. These branchiae are easy to find if the specimen is long enough and searched thoroughly. Any specimen less than fourteen setigers in length cannot be identified to species and should be recorded as *Poecilochaetus* sp. The species can be identified without staining or mounting.



FIGURE 7. Family POECILOCHAETIDAE, *Poecilochaetus johnsoni*, off Loon Point, Santa Barbara, California, 35 m, 25x.

Figure from Fauchald, 1977