

LifeWatch Data Grant 2014

Filling the gaps in the World Register of Marine species (WoRMS)

Piscicolidae

Final Report

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1. Data grant background

This grant paid for work to complete the inventory list of the marine leeches or Piscicolidae in the WoRMS database. The work focused on finding missing species to complete the inventory and to clarify many synonymies as a common issue in leech taxonomic work. Additional information was aimed to be included ideally from primary literature to fill more gaps and provide further information on the zoogeography of these fish parasites. The elusive nature of these marine animals does not facilitate easy sampling and as a consequence our scientific knowledge to the total number of species in the marine habitat is rather limited. This work aimed to clarify what is known and to bring some more structure into the inventory available online.

2. Agreed deliverables (as specified in the Data Grant contract)

The addition of missing species (estimated at 20) to WoRMS inventory and the revision of species names to find synonymies for ca. 100 species. Further information to be provided for around 200 species to habitat, zoogeography, host species and other relevant information found in primary literature.

3. Results of the project:

A total of 53 species were added and 128 revised of which 54 were synonymous and needed corrections. Some species were removed as incorrectly stated to be marine as in fact they were terrestrial relatives. Further information to habitat, host species and distribution was added to nearly every species checked in the inventory of WoRMS. The original references were added and where possible a file of the primary literature. Some species required corrections to the year and/or author(s) of the first description.

4. (Brief) description of the work/methodology

The work included sourcing of literature in various languages (English, German, French, Russian, Italian, Spanish) and the review of species names based on information to their first descriptions. Any further relevant information found was added to the database.

5. Problems encountered and how it was solved (or expected solutions).

The main issue encountered was the extreme difficulty to obtain much of the literature cited in older 18th and 19th century publications as well as newer

Russian literature. Despite best efforts this could not be fully overcome and has impacted on the results of this work. Though it must be noted that only a few synonymies remain unsolved for that reason. It will require a very dedicated person employed in academia and without time constraints to fully resolve the remaining inventory issues in the group of Piscicolidae.

6. Other: remarks, suggestions, other information, bibliography, ...
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As lies in the nature of taxonomic work in general, the task of adding new species and revision of existing names is ongoing. Yet at this point the inventory of WoRMS is comprehensive and lists most if not all Piscicolidae currently described and known to science.