



Research note

New records of *Erichsonella attenuata* (Isopoda: Valvifera: Idoteidae) in the Gulf of Mexico

Nuevos registros de Erichsonella attenuata (Isopoda: Valvifera: Idoteidae) en el golfo de México

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Abstract

Erichsonella attenuata is an isopod species distributed in the Western Atlantic region of the Gulf of Mexico and is associated with sea-grass beds composed of *Ruppia maritima*, *Halodule wrightii* and *Thalassia testudinum*. In the Gulf of Mexico, this isopod species is found only along the USA coasts, in Texas and Florida. The aim of this work is to report, for the first time, the presence of *E. attenuata* along Mexican coasts, particularly in the Tamiahua and Términos lagoons in the states of Veracruz and Campeche, respectively. These are the most southern records for the Gulf of Mexico, showing that this species expands its coverage virtually to the entire coast of the Gulf of Mexico. The specimens were deposited in the Colección Nacional de Crustáceos, Instituto de Biología, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

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Keywords: *Erichsonella attenuata*; New record; Tamiahua lagoon; Términos lagoon

Resumen

Erichsonella attenuata es una especie de isópodo distribuida en el Atlántico oeste del golfo de México y está asociada a pastos marinos compuestos por *Ruppia maritima*, *Halodule wrightii* y *Thalassia testudinum*. En el golfo de México, en las costas de los EE. UU., este isópodo se encuentra en Texas y Florida. El objetivo de este trabajo es registrar por primera vez la presencia de *E. attenuata* en costas mexicanas, particularmente en las lagunas de Tamiahua y Términos en los estados de Veracruz y Campeche, respectivamente. Estos registros son los más sureños en el golfo de México y muestran que esta especie se expande en cobertura virtualmente a todas las costas del golfo de México. Los ejemplares fueron depositados en la Colección Nacional de Crustáceos, Instituto de Biología, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

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Palabras clave: *Erichsonella attenuata*; Nuevo registro; Laguna de Tamiahua; Laguna de Términos

Erichsonella Richardson, 1900 is a shallow-water American genus of isopod, inhabiting tropical and warm temperate regions found on algae, mud flats, sea grasses and oyster beds (Pirés, 1984). *Erichsonella attenuata* (Harger, 1874) vary in colour,

from amber to brown and both male and female individuals may have darker spots on the dorsal and ventral areas, with a maximum total length of 18.4 mm; on average adult males are longer than females and are known from the New Jersey, Connecticut, Miami, Florida and Mississippi (Pirés, 1984).

In the Gulf of Mexico, *E. attenuata* is present along the Texas coast, in the intertidal zone from 0 m to 20 m depth (Boström & Mattila, 2005; Kensley & Schotte, 1989; Pirés, 1984). According to the division of the Gulf of Mexico proposed by Felder, Camp,

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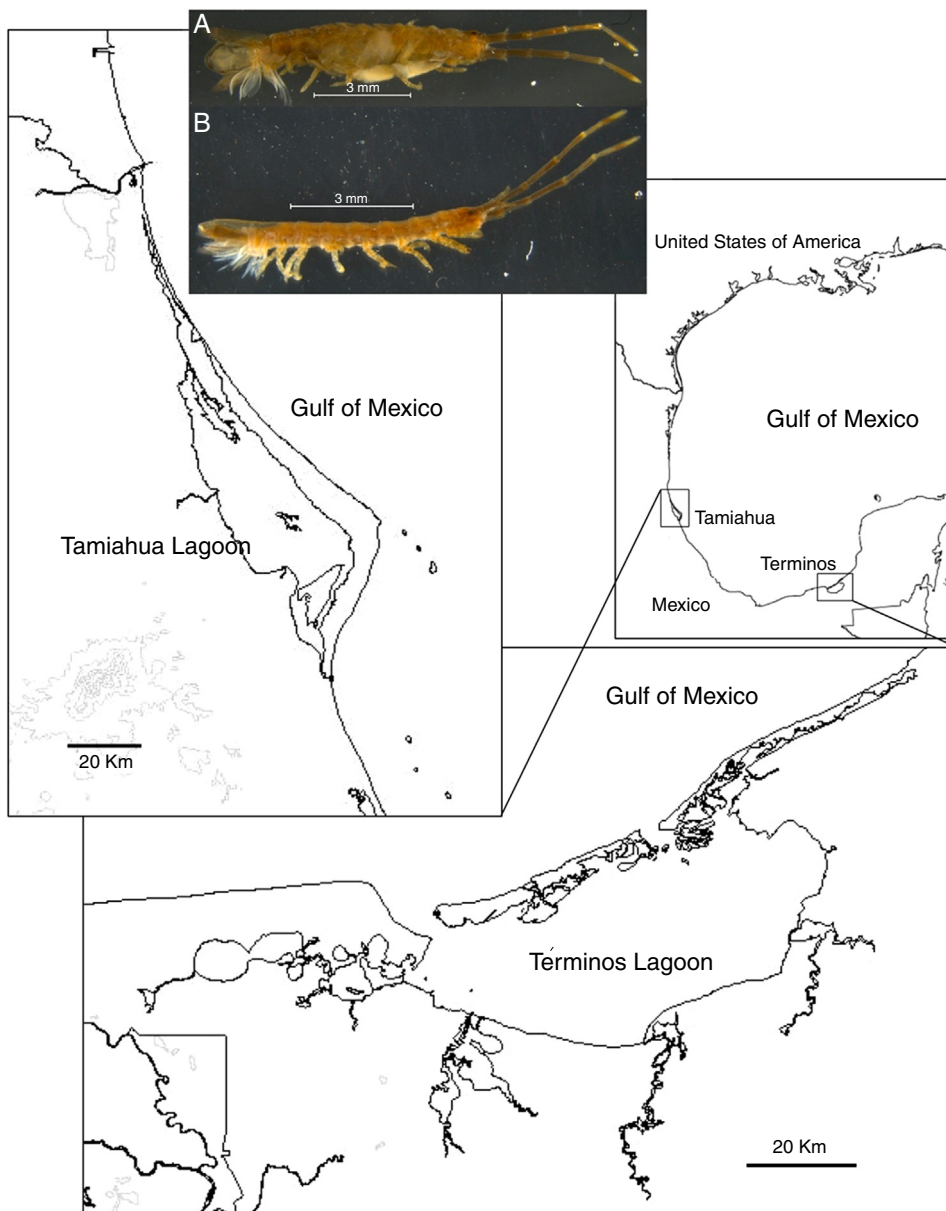


Figure 1. Map showing Tamiahua and Términos lagoons in Mexican coast in the Southern, Southwestern and East-Northeast regions, respectively, of the Gulf of Mexico. Inset: *Erichsonella attenuata* (Harger, 1874). (A) Ovigerous female and (B) male.

and Tunnell (2009), the species is observed in the North-East and North-West regions, delimited in the South by parallel 25° N.

This isopod species has been observed in some sites of the Western Atlantic part of the Gulf of Mexico (Kensley, Nelson, & Schotte, 1995) and it is associated with sea-grass beds (Boström & Mattila, 1999; Darcy & Eggleston, 2005; Sheridan, 2004), such as *Ruppia maritima*, *Halodule wrightii* and *Thalassia testudinum* (Boström & Mattila, 2005; Kensley et al., 1995). In the Indian River Lagoon, Florida, *E. attenuata* is one of the 3 most common invertebrate species found in *H. wrightii* beds and it is an important epiphytic grazer. It is also an important food resource for higher trophic levels, occasionally consumed extensively by sea grass-associated fish (Ryer & Orth, 1987).

In this paper, the presence of *E. attenuata* is reported for the first time in Mexican coasts, in the Tamiahua Lagoon,

Veracruz and in the Términos Lagoon, Campeche (Fig. 1). Tamiahua is located in the West-Southwest (WSW) region of the Gulf of Mexico and the Términos Lagoon is located in the South-Southwest (SSW) region (Felder et al., 2009). Schotte, Markham, and Wilson (2009), according to regions mentioned by Felder et al. (2009), reported *E. attenuata* in the North-Northeast (NNE) and the East-Northeast (ENE) regions of the Gulf of Mexico.

In the Tamiahua Lagoon 2,315 individuals of *E. attenuata* were collected with scoop nets (mesh aperture 1.6 mm) from July 2010 to August 2011, between 21°25'46"–21°28'46" N and 97°24'22"–97°26'57" W. These were associated with *H. wrightii*, which is present on the eastern coasts of America, including Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and North Carolina (USA), the east coast of Mexico, the West Indies (Cuba,

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