

***Ameroculodes miltoni*, a new species of estuarine amphipod (Crustacea: Malacostraca: Peracarida: Oedicerotidae) from the southeastern United States**

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Abstract

The genus *Ameroculodes* Bousfield and Chevrier, 1966 is emended to accommodate a new species of oedicerotid amphipod, *Ameroculodes miltoni*, common to estuarine habitats of the southeastern United States. In this region the new species has been confused with *Ameroculodes* (= *Monoculodes*) *edwardsi* (Holmes, 1905) and *Deflexilodes* (= *Monoculodes*) *intermedius* (Shoemaker, 1930), both of which are distinctly larger and endemic to the cold temperate waters of the Northwest Atlantic. *Ameroculodes miltoni* can be distinguished from *A. edwardsi* by (1) having the postero-ventral margins of epimeral plates 1-3 rounded, (2) a short, blunt rostrum, (3) uropod 2 with relatively few dorsal spines on the peduncle, (4) and a subovate telson. *Deflexilodes intermedius*, like *A. miltoni*, has rounded epimeral plates, but is readily distinguished by the well-developed, elongate dactyls on its 3rd and 4th pereopods. *Ameroculodes miltoni* occurs over a wide range of salinities (<1‰ to 35‰) and is most common in medium to fine sand or sand-silt substrata. It appears to be an important biotic component of northern Gulf of Mexico estuaries.

Key Words: Amphipoda; Oedicerotidae; Florida; Crustacea; *Ameroculodes*; taxonomy

Introduction

In the southeastern United States, an undescribed estuarine oedicerotid amphipod has long been confused in both the formally published and gray literature with *Ameroculodes* (= *Monoculodes*) *edwardsi* (Holmes, 1905) and *Deflexilodes* (= *Monoculodes*) *intermedius* (Shoemaker, 1930), two larger, morphologically distinct species that are apparently confined to the cold temperate waters of the Northwest Atlantic. Based on the examination of