

First record and molecular characterisation of two *Gnathia* species (Crustacea, Isopoda, Gnathiidae) from Philippine coral reefs

Mary O. Shodipo¹, Paul C. Sikkel², Nico J. Smit³ and Kerry A. Hadfield³

¹*Institute of Environmental and Marine Sciences, Silliman University, Dumaguete City, 6200, Negros Oriental, Philippines - mary.shodipo@gmail.com*

²*Department of Marine and Atmospheric Science, Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, University of Miami, Miami, FL USA; and Water Research Group, Unit for Environmental Sciences and Management, North-West University, Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom, 2520, South Africa - paul.sikkel@gmail.com*

³*Water Research Group, Unit for Environmental Sciences and Management, North-West University, Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom, 2520, South Africa - Nico.Smit@nwu.ac.za; Kerry26@yahoo.com*

Gnathiid isopods are marine crustacean ectoparasites that do not permanently live on their fish hosts, being parasitic only in their larval stages. As gnathiids have been reported as one of the more common marine ectoparasites in coral reef habitats, it is unsurprising that more than a third of *Gnathia* species have either been originally described or reported from the Central Indo-Pacific. While the Philippines sits within the region of highest marine biodiversity in the world, the coral triangle, no gnathiid species have been identified or described from that region. Here we present the first records of two gnathiid species collected from the Visayas, central Philippines: *Gnathia malaysiensis* Müller, 1993, previously described from Malaysia, and *G. camuripenis* Tanaka, 2004, previously described from southern Japan. This study provided detailed morphological redescriptions, drawings and scanning electron microscope images as well as the first molecular characterisation of both species.