

REVISION OF APONCHIIDAE GERLACH, 1963 (NEMATODA: MONHYSTERIDA) EPIBIOTIC NEMATODES ON SHELLS OF INTERTIDAL EPIBENTHIC INVERTEBRATES, WITH DESCRIPTION OF NEW SPECIES*

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ABSTRACT

Freeliving nematodes of the family Aponchiidae Gerlach, 1963 live epizoically. They occur on shells of epibenthic invertebrates (bivalves, corals and snails) in intertidal waters with a submerged vegetation, where they presumably feed on the attached epiphytes (filamentous algae and pennate diatoms). Emended diagnoses to the family and the two genera are provided, and the eight valid species are described: *Aponchium cylindricolle* Cobb, 1920, *Synonema californicum* n.sp., *S. cosmopoliticum* n.sp., *S. gerlachi* n.sp., *S. loofi* n.sp., *S. ochrum* (Chitwood, 1951), *S. phuketense* n.sp., *S. wieseri* n.sp. Many characters point to a relationship within the Monhysterida: Aponchiidae is placed in the superfamily Siphonolaimoidea, but distinguished from the other two families (Linhomoeidae and Siphonolaimidae) by the anterior restis being reflexed and the lack of a posterior testis.

* Dedicated to the memory of the late professor Dr. Lucien De Coninck, State University of Ghent, Belgium (1909-1988)