

## THREE NEW SPECIES OF THE GENUS *SYNONCHIUM* COBB, 1920 (CHROMADORIDA: SELACHINEMATIDAE) FROM MANGROVE AREAS OF PAKISTAN

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### Abstract

The mangroves areas of Pakistan are unique being representative of the largest arid zone mangroves in the world. Mangroves swamps support a high biological diversity of microorganisms. Pakistan has a rich meiofauna in the coastal and inshore water of the Arabian Sea. Samples collected during a survey for meiofauna of mangrove in coastal areas of Pakistan, yielded three new species viz., *Synonchium pakistanense* n. sp., *S. oblongus* n. sp., and *S. marina* n. sp., of the family Selachinematidae which are described here with measurements, descriptions, drawings, light microscopic photographs and a key to the species. The Selachinematidae nematodes are characterized by having annulated cuticle with transverse rows of punctations, multi-spiral amphids, buccal cavity ornament, in the form of mandibles, precloacal supplements, cup-shaped or setose, testes usually paired, ovaries always paired opposed and reflexed. Specimens of *S. pakistanense* n. sp., are characterized by five similar sized teeth on the mandibles, presence of distinct punctations on the cuticle, bluntly rounded tail and presence of ventromedian supplements in male. *S. pakistanense* n. sp., comes close to *S. obtusum* Cobb, 1920; *S. capense* Heyns & Swart, 1995; *S. mediterraneum* Vinciguerra & Orselli, 1997 and *S. siculum* Vinciguerra & Oreslli, 1997 but differs from them in a number of characteristics. *Synonchium oblongus* n. sp., closely related to *S. depressum* Gerlach, 1954 and *S. marina* n. sp., in having conoid tail and amphid three time as broad as high, but it differs from *S. depressum* in combination of characters: mandible with five teeth, slender body, smaller tail and spicules, presence of gubernaculum and ventromedian supplement in male. It differs from *S. marinan.* sp., in smaller body length, mandible with five teeth, presence of gubernaculum, longer tail, and smaller pharynx and in greater tail ratio. *S. marina* n. sp., is characterized by oblong amphid, robust body, mandibles with three large similar sized teeth and presence of preanal supplements. It comes close to *S. depressum* Gerlach, 1954, and *S. oblongus* n. sp., in having conoid tail and amphids wider than high but it differs from *S. depressum* in longer body, in greater a, b and c ratios and smaller c'ratio. It differs from *S. oblongus* n. sp., in longer and robust body in greater a, b and c ratios and smaller c' ratio, wider head, amphid less wide, in longer spicules, in number of supplements, absence of gubernaculum and mandibles with three teeth. A list of free-living marine nematodes found during the surveys is also incorporated..