Acarologia is proudly non-profit, with no page charges and free open access

Please help us maintain this system by encouraging your institutes to subscribe to the print version of the journal and by sending us your high quality research on the Acari.

Subscriptions: Year 2021 (Volume 61): 450 €
http://www1.montpellier.inra.fr/CBGP/acarologia/subscribe.php
Previous volumes (2010-2020): 250 € / year (4 issues)
Acarologia, CBGP, CS 30016, 34988 MONTFERRIER-sur-LEZ Cedex, France
ISSN 0044-586X (print), ISSN 2107-7207 (electronic)

The digitalization of Acarologia papers prior to 2000 was supported by Agropolis Fondation under the reference ID 1500-024 through the « Investissements d’avenir » programme (Labex Agro: ANR-10-LABX-0001-01)

Acarologia is under free license and distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons-BY-NC-ND which permits unrestricted non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.
On the taxonomic status of the water mite genus *Spongibates* Wainstein, 1978 (Acari, Hydrachnidia, Hygrobatidae)

Petr V. Tuzovskij\(^a\), Harry Smit\(^b\)

\(^a\)Papanin Institute for Biology of Inland Waters of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Borok, Yaroslavl Prov., 152742, Russia.
\(^b\)Naturalis Biodiversity Center, P.O. Box 9517, 2300 RA Leiden, the Netherlands.

Short note

**ABSTRACT**

The identity of the water mite genus *Spongibates* Wainstein, 1978 has been examined. After examination of the holotype, we conclude that Wainstein described an aberrant *Hygrobates* species, very likely *H. nigromaculatus*. Therefore, *Spongibates* should be considered a junior synonym of *Hygrobates*.

**Keywords** Hydrachnidia; taxonomy; systematics; *Spongibates*; *Hygrobates*

**Zoobank** [http://zoobank.org/DE727D1E-BA34-40C5-81CF-6EA250D78040](http://zoobank.org/DE727D1E-BA34-40C5-81CF-6EA250D78040)

**Introduction**

The water mite genus *Spongibates* has been described from Russia by Wainstein (1978). We noted some errors and discrepancies in the original publication. The aim of this paper is, therefore, to give a correct description of the genus and type species *S. globosus* Wainstein, 1978, and to discuss its taxonomic status.

**Materials and methods**

The terminology of idiosomal setae follows Tuzovskij (1987). The following abbreviations are used: P–1–5, pedipalp segments (trochanter, femur, genu, tibia and tarsus); I–Leg–1–6, first leg, segments 1–6 (trochanter, basifemur, telofemur, genu, tibia and tarsus) i.e. III–Leg–4 = genu of third leg; L – length, W – width; ll – leaf-like projection; n = number of specimens measured; all measurements are given in μm.

**Systematics**

**Genus Spongibates** Wainstein, 1978

*Spongibates* Wainstein, Zoologichesky Zhurnal, 57: 787. [In Russian] Type species: *Spongibates globosus* Wainstein, 1978

**Material examined** — Holotype, slide 16260, deposited in the collection of Papanin Institute for Biology of Inland Waters (Borok, Russia).

**Description** — Idiosoma round, almost spherical, with five pairs of slit organs (Fig 1A-B). Integument finely striated. Lateral eyes beneath the integument. Setae *Fch* thicker than other idiosomal setae. Idiosomal setae associated with glandularia except for trichobothria *Fp* and *Oi* and setae *Pi*. Coxal plates I fused medially and with the capitulum to a large anteroventral...
plate. Posteromedial margin of Cx-I rounded, Cx-IV subtriangular in shape, with a nose-like protruding medial margin. Genital field with three pairs of acetabula. Coxal plates and genital field cover nearly all of the ventral surface. Capitulum with a short rostrum and several minute, leaf-like anterior projections on each side. Pedipalp large (Fig. 1C): P-1 with a single short dorso-distal seta, P-2 with six thick setae and without ventro-distal projection, P-3 with four thick setae and one thin seta, P-2 and P-3 with denticulate ventral margin, P-4 ventral setae on the same level near middle of segment. Legs long, thin without swimming setae. First pair of legs 1.5 times, posterior pair of legs 2.6 times longer than idiosoma. Leg claws with long external clawlet and short internal one, lamella with concave ventral margin (Fig. 1D).


**Distribution** — Europe, Russia, Yaroslavl Province, Nekouz District, littoral zone of Rybinsk reservoir near settlement of Borok (Wainstein 1978).

**Habitat** — The species has been found in a fresh-water sponge of the family Spongillidae.

**Remarks** — The idiosoma shape, unusual length of legs, structure of capitulum and genital plates are considered as diagnostic characteristics of the genus *Spongibates* by Wainstein (1978). In fact, the coxal plates and genital field in the female *S. globosus* cover nearly all the ventral surface (Fig. 1B). However, such a shape of the ventral surface is characteristic for juvenile adults and deutonymphs (Fig. 2A) of the genus *Hygrobates*, while in mature specimens of this genus the coxal plates occupy about half or less than one half of the ventral surface (Figs. 2B-3A). For instance, the idiosoma length differs strongly between a juvenile (180-200) and a mature deutonymph (480-550) of *H. nigromaculatus* Lebert, 1879. In juvenile deutonymphs of this species the fourth legs are 2-3 times longer than the idiosoma, while in mature specimens

---

**Figure 1** *Spongibates globosus* Wainstein, 1978, female: A – idiosoma, dorsal view; B – idiosoma, ventral view; C – pedipalp, ventral view; D – leg claw, lateral view; II – leaf-like projection (redrawn from Wainstein 1978).
the fourth legs are equal or only a little longer than the idiosoma. In mature Hygrobates females the coxal plates occupy less than one half of the ventral surface (Fig. 3A). The genital field of the female S. globosus (Fig. 1B) is similar to the genital field of H. nigromaculatus (Fig. 3B) and some other species of the genus (Gerecke et al. 2016). Also the leg claws of S. globosus (Fig. 1D) are similar to those of H. nigromaculatus (Fig. 3C).

Thus, based on the idiosoma shape, the unusual relative length of the legs and the structure of the genital plates, it is clear that Wainstein (1978) described a juvenile specimen of Hygrobates, very likely H. nigromaculatus (see below). Therefore, the genus Spongibates should be considered as a junior synonym of the genus Hygrobates.

Three species of the genus Hygrobates have been found in Rybinsk reservoir (Tuzovskij 1974, 1996), i.e. H. longipalpis (Hermann, 1804), H. nigromaculatus and H. trigonicus Koenike, 1895. The female of Spongibates globosus (Wainstein, 1978) is most similar to the female H. nigromaculatus.

The unique character which distinguishes *Spongibates* is, according to Wainstein (1978), the presence of several minute leaf-like anterior projections on each side of the capitulum in the female of *S. globosus*, a feature not reported in other taxa of the family Hygrobatidae (Cook 1974, Gerecke et al. 2016). We suppose that Wainstein (1978) possibly described a juvenile aberrant female of *H. nigromaculatus*. 

**Figure 3** *Hygrobatis nigromaculatus* Lebert, 1879, female: A – ventral view, B – genital field; C – leg claw (Scale bars: A=200 μm, B=100 μm, C=50 μm).
Acknowledgements

This research was performed in the framework of the state assignment of FASO Russia (theme No 0122-2014-0007). We express deep gratitude to anonymous referees for reviewing the manuscript.

References


