Records of the Australian Museum (1993) Vol.45: 253–277. ISSN 0067-1975

A Revision of the *Perinereis nuntia* Species Group (Polychaeta: Nereididae)

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ABSTRACT. The *Perinereis nuntia* species group is revised on the basis of material from worldwide localities. Twenty available names are reduced to 12 recognised species, including two new species: *Perinereis akuna* (from southern Australia) and *P. namibia* (from southern Africa). Specimens from Indonesia and from Juan Fernandez Islands cannot be identified and may represent two additional undescribed species. *Perinereis broomensis* Hartmann-Schröder, 1979 is synonymised with *P. nuntia* (Savigny, 1818) for the first time. A key to species is provided.

WILSON, R.S. & C.J. GLASBY, 1993. A revision of the *Perinereis nuntia* species group (Polychaeta: Nereididae). Records of the Australian Museum 45(3): 253–277.

The *Perinereis nuntia* species group is characterised by an arc of bar-shaped paragnaths on Area VI of the eversible proboscis. These nereidid worms are common in intertidal and shallow marine waters and are widely distributed on the coasts of the southern continents and the tropical Indo-Pacific (Fig.1). Wilson (1993) studied two unidentified species in the *P. nuntia* species group from southeastern Australia and provided guidelines for the interpretation of morphological variability. In this paper we apply the results of Wilson (1993) to a worldwide revision of the *Perinereis nuntia* species group. The remaining species in the genus *Perinereis* have been treated by Hutchings *et al.* (1991).

Perinereis nuntia (Savigny, 1818) was described from the Gulf of Suez. There are few subsequent published records until the radical treatment of Fauvel (1932), who synonymised *P. nuntia* with a number of species previously regarded as distinct. Most recent authors have followed Fauvel, and *P. nuntia* has now been recorded from all southern hemisphere continents except Antarctica, from Japan through South-east Asia to India and the Middle-East. Fauvel's influence has also resulted in the widespread adoption of trinomens in an attempt to account for morphological variability in this supposed species. Fauvel's trinomens apparently were not intended to represent geographical variants or subspecies since each was credited with a wide distribution and several varieties were often recorded from the same locality or region. Fauvel (1932: 109) observed that "Between the varieties of this unsettled species many specimens are intermediate, and so gradual are the transitions that they cannot be assigned definitely to any variety". Trinomens continue to be widely used in the literature for this species group, which includes 20 nominal species and