

Commemorative volume for the 80th birthday of Willem Vervoort in 1997

**Willem Vervoort, eminent zoologist and museum director,
a sketch of his life and work on the occasion of his
80th birthday in 1997**

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Bruggen, A.C. van. Willem Vervoort, eminent zoologist and museum director, a sketch of his life and work on the occasion of his 80th birthday in 1997.

Zool. Verh. Leiden 323, 31.xii.1998: 1-15, figs 1-8.— ISSN 0024-1652/ISBN 90-73239-68-0.

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Key words: Cnidaria, Hydrozoa; Crustacea; Copepoda; biography; bibliography; history of biology; Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie/Leiden; National Museum of Natural History/Leiden.

Willem Vervoort was born on 12 June 1917 in Schiedam. He read biology at Leiden university (1936-1941, interrupted by active war service) where he obtained his Ph.D. in 1946 under the supervision of Prof. Dr H. Boschma with a thesis entitled 'The Copepoda of the Snellius Expedition I'. In 1941 Dr Vervoort was appointed assistant, later curator of invertebrates at the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden, where he was in charge of the invertebrates minus arthropods and molluscs. He worked at the museum on hydroids and copepods until 1950, interrupted by two trips to Antarctica where he was cetacean biologist to the national whaling company (1946/1947, 1947/1948). In the period 1950-1959 Dr Vervoort was lecturer in histology/cytology in the zoology department of the university. In 1959 he returned to the museum to the position he had held before. In 1970 he was appointed assistant director, and in 1972 director of the museum. In 1982 he had to leave when reaching the statutory age of retirement (65). In the years 1973-1982 Vervoort also occupied the chair of Systematic Zoology at the university. Far from retiring in practice, he was allowed to retain a suite of rooms in one of the outbuildings of the museum where he continued his specialist work, among other activities supervising a number of foreign Ph.D. students in his specialisations, particularly hydroid taxonomy. During his long tenure Dr Vervoort became a highly respected and internationally recognized specialist in Copepoda and Hydrozoa, on which he published numerous authoritative treatises and papers. During his work at the museum, he undertook a lot of field work in marine biology in Europe (Scandinavia, Spain), the West Indies and Surinam, the eastern Atlantic and New Guinea. As director of the museum he consolidated the considerable achievements of his famous predecessors, Prof. Dr L.D. Brongersma (director 1958- 1972) and Prof. Dr H. Boschma (director 1933-1958). This paper describes Dr Vervoort's life and work in some detail and includes a full bibliography (112 numbers until the end of August 1997, a number of these with foreign co-authors) with a list of taxa newly described, viz. a total of 167, i.e. Hydrozoa 97 (genera 4, species 89, subspecies 3, variety 1) and Copepoda 70 (family 1, subfamily 1, genera 11, species 57) - many in conjunction with foreign colleagues).

When Prof. Vervoort retired in 1982, at a time of some government financial stringency, he was honoured by the publication of a modest collection of papers by some colleagues (Van Bruggen & Wiebes, eds, 1982), entitled 'Acta Vervoortiana'. Only much later, on his 80th birthday in 1997, the idea of a proper 'Festschrift' took root among his colleagues and friends and finally came to fruition. Unfortunately, the Acta Vervoortiana only featured a portrait of Willem Vervoort without accompanying biography/bibliography. Herewith I will attempt to remedy this.

Willem Vervoort was born on 12 June 1917 in Schiedam, a minor port city to the west of Rotterdam. An early interest in marine biology was kindled because his father



Fig. 1. An early photograph of Willem Vervoort in his office in the museum, February 1942.

was a wholesale dealer in fish. In Schiedam he obtained his high school diploma (H.B.S.-B) in 1936 after which he read biology at Leiden University in the years 1936-1941. These were turbulent years; his study was interrupted when he was mobilized as an infantryman in September 1939. Subsequently he saw war service as a sergeant with the 10th Infantry Regiment (10 R.I.) when he was engaged in the short but fierce and tragic battles against the German invader in May 1940. Nevertheless he was able to return to the university to obtain his master's degree (Doctorandus in de Wiskunde en Natuurwetenschappen) in 1941. The position of the university and its students under the German occupation became increasingly difficult, finally resulting in the closure of Leiden University by the German authorities on 15 November 1941 as a sequel to non-compliance concerning the dismissal of Jewish professors. Before the university was closed, Willem Vervoort succeeded in obtaining his degree. From 1941 he joined the staff of the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie in Leiden as scientific assistant. At that time this national museum was loosely attached to the university, its director being the professor of systematic zoology, the redoubtable Prof. Dr H. Boschma (director 1933-1958, professor of systematic zoology 1933-1964). The director fought tirelessly for the survival of the museum and its staff throughout the difficult war years. Work continued despite sometimes extremely difficult conditions caused by shortage of fuel, and eventually even of all power. Despite these adversities, Willem Vervoort was able to complete and publish his thesis, entitled 'The Copepoda of the Snellius Expedition I', soon after the war had ended. On 6 February 1946 he publicly defended his thesis under the supervision of Prof. Boschma and the title of Ph.D. (Doctor in de Wiskunde en Natuurwetenschappen) was bestowed on him with due ceremony in the main university building in Leiden.

Meanwhile at the museum, Vervoort was appointed curator of invertebrates minus arthropods and molluscs¹. He vigorously pursued his research, rapidly becoming an expert on hydroids and copepods. His museum work was interrupted by two antarctic trips as whale biologist with the Dutch national whaling company on the factory vessel *Willem Barentsz* (1946/1947 and 1947/1948), a unique experience for a young marine biologist. Vervoort was just the person to make the most of this unusual opportunity bringing a rich material back to Leiden.

His growing family necessitated more liberal financial resources and with regret he had to leave the museum in 1950 to take up the better-paid post of junior lecturer, later lecturer ('wetenschappelijk ambtenaar', later 'wetenschappelijk hoofdambtenaar') in cytology/histology at the department of zoology of the university (Zoologisch Laboratorium van de Rijksuniversiteit). This laboratory was only a few paces from the museum where he kept his contacts. In the zoology department he spent nine fruitful years (1950-1959) and generations of biology students were privileged to be taught the basics of cytology and histology in theoretical and practical courses under his able guidance. In this period Vervoort also supervised a number of M.Sc. and Ph.D. theses.

In July 1959 Vervoort returned to the museum, where he again acted as curator of invertebrates minus arthropods and molluscs until he took over as director in 1972. Prior to this, he had already functioned as assistant director (1970-1972). During his directorate (1972-1982) Vervoort also occupied the chair of Systematic Zoology at Leiden University as an Extraordinary Professor ('buitengewoon hoogleraar'). One of the theses he supervised jointly with Prof. Dr J.T. Wiebes was in his own speciality (J.C. von Vaupel Klein on copepods, 1984). As director of the museum he consolidated the considerable achievements of his famous predecessors, Prof. Boschma (director 1933-1958) and Prof. Dr L.D. Brongersma (director 1958-1972). During his tenure the museum went through some difficult periods. Since the move from the old building at the Rapenburg to the purpose-built complex in the Raamsteeg just before the First World War, the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie had functioned solely as a biodiversity research institute with little pretence of acting as a public museum. Parliament, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Welfare and the public at large increasingly demanded exhibitions and Dr Brongersma as director initiated a modest beginning in the form of 'open days', public lectures, and temporary exhibitions. Vervoort vigorously continued and fostered this policy. His efforts on behalf of the museum met with some success and it was able to retain its extensive scientific staff and budget to continue unabatedly its functions as the national zoological biodiversity

¹The Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie has always had a somewhat anomalous situation as regards invertebrate non-insect staff (this is, of course, not unique, cf. National Museum of Natural History, Washington D.C., U.S.A.). At the time Dr. Vervoort (re-)entered the museum as a staff member in 1959 there were three curators in this field: a curator of Mollusca (Dr C.O. van Regteren Altena), a curator of Crustacea (Dr L.B. Holthuis), and a curator of 'Evertebrata cetera', which position was occupied by Dr Vervoort and which covered all other groups. Dr Vervoort's work on the Copepoda therefore was not strictly in his own department. The Leiden Museum has had a tradition of staff members at times working on other subjects. A summary survey of the Vervoort period brings to mind a curator of birds publishing on fishes, a curator of fishes being an expert on Dermoptera, a curator of Lepidoptera as specialist on molluscs, while Prof. Boschma as director worked on Stylasterina, Rhizocephala and Cetacea!



Figs 2-5. Various photographs of Willem Vervoort. 2, Vervoort in the fifties; 3, Vervoort (left) with the then director of the museum, Prof. Dr L.D. Brongersma (right), at a military ceremony in 1960 in the grounds of the barracks of the Marines at Doorn, where medals were distributed for services to the New Guinea Expedition 1959; 4, Vervoort during the CANCAP expedition of 1982 on board the Netherlands naval research vessel H.NL.M.S. Tydeman; 5, Vervoort in his office in the museum, October 1973.

institute. Upon his retirement the Queen deservedly bestowed upon him the honour of Knight in the Order of the Netherlands Lion ('Ridder in de Orde van de Nederlandsche Leeuw').

Vervoort engaged in a lot of fieldwork during his career. The antarctic whaling expeditions have already been mentioned. His other trips varied from excursions with students to biological stations in Scandinavia, and the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts of France and Spain, to participation in major marine expeditions on research vessels to the continental plateau of Surinam (OCPS) and the areas around the Caribbean island of Curaçao (CICAR), and the Canary and Cape Verde Islands (CANCAP). Research visits to museums also featured prominently among Vervoort's travels. Throughout the last decades of his official working life he annually visited the Natural History Museum in London, mainly for research on the literature of the Copepoda. In addition, Vervoort participated in one major non-marine expedition, the Star Mountains Expedition (Sterrengebergte Expeditie, 1959) to the mountains of then Netherlands New Guinea (now Irian Jaya). In the field he was an energetic and skilful collector, never shirking more arduous tasks such as moving heavy equipment on board research vessels.

Despite his field and museum research work, Vervoort did not shy away from organizational and administrative tasks. The museum directorate asked for a lot of investment of time in administration; as a national museum the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie was subject to control by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Welfare and the director's task involved close supervision of general management and administration. Nevertheless, Vervoort served on the council of e.g. the Zoological Society ('Nederlandse Dierkundige Vereniging') and, particularly as a sequel to his position as director of the national museum of natural history, various other quasi-governmental bodies (e.g., Z.W.O., the national foundation for purely scientific research), sometimes of great importance in the field of administering national grants and subsidies. Apart from frequently acting as referee, Vervoort served on the editorial board of the *Netherlands Journal of Zoology* (formerly the *Archives néerlandaises de Zoologie*) in the late sixties and since 1985 on that of the specialist journal *Crustaceana*.

His period as director of the museum and university professor came to an end in 1982 when he reached the statutory age of retirement (65). Far from retiring in practice, he was allowed to retain a suite of rooms in one of the outbuildings of the museum, where he continued his specialist work, among others supervising a number of foreign Ph.D. and post-doc projects in his specialisms. Vervoort was an early devotee of the personal computer and its predecessors, entering the electronic age well before many of his younger colleagues! He also used e-mail years before his Leiden museum colleagues.

The research work and publications of Vervoort may be divided into three categories, viz., on (1) hydroids, (2) copepods, and (3) more general work comprising a limited number of publications on e.g. whales and whaling, molluscs, cytology and histology, the Leiden museum, general marine biology and some obituaries.

His work on hydroids started early, in fact his very first publication was on the hydroids of the Snellius Expedition to eastern Indonesia (1941a). His publications on hydroids cover the period 1941-1949, outstanding among which is a book on the



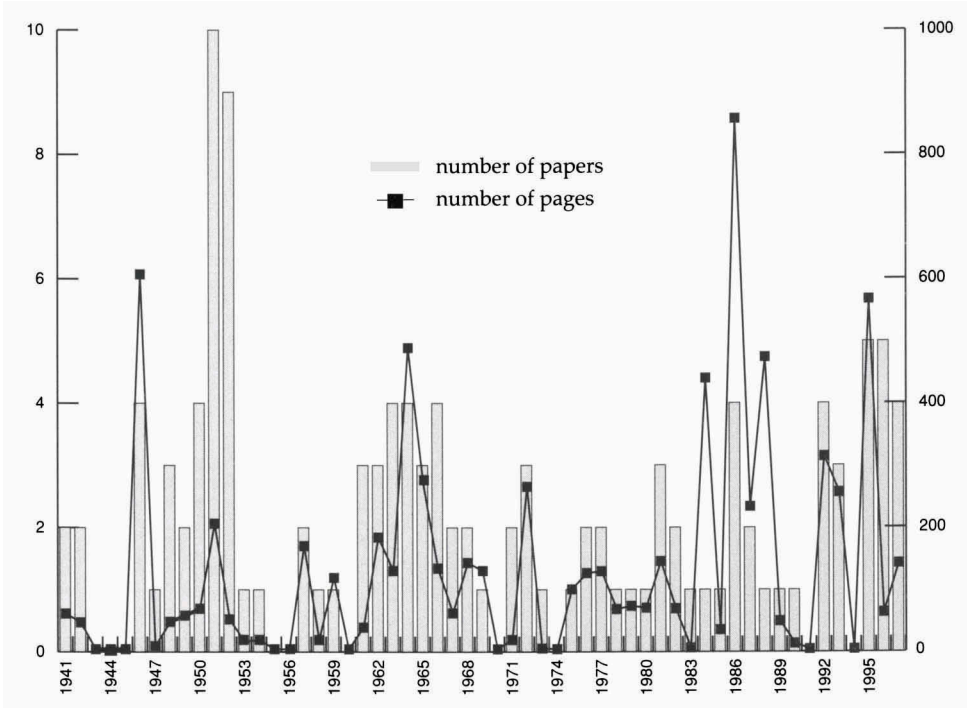


Fig. 8. Graph depicting the scientific work of Willem Vervoort in the period 1941 until the end of 1997. Both number of papers (left vertical axis) and number of pages per year (right vertical axis) are shown. Graph courtesy Dr Antonio C. Marques (São Paulo, Brazil). Note that various periods which involved a lot of non- scientific work, such as the directorate of the museum (1972-1982), are marked by comparatively little activity. One should also note the enormous upsurge in scientific activity after his official retirement in 1982; the highest ever published number of pages was in 1986. The above counts of papers/taxa, etc. only applies to the list covering everything until the end of August 1997. Lists supplied by W. Vervoort.

Dutch hydroids (1946). After that Vervoort only published irregularly and intermittently on this group. However, after retiring he wound up his work on the copepods (last paper on this group: 1990) and concentrated on the hydroids. His copepod work varied from important plankton identification papers to major treatises, culminating in his three-volume bibliography of the Copepoda (1986-1988). As an internationally recognized specialist Vervoort attracted a lot of attention from colleagues and marine biologists. This resulted in many invitations to visit foreign institutions, as far afield as New Zealand, and to work on their material, but also brought many people to Leiden to work with him and under his guidance.

Vervoort is very proud indeed of his family - incidentally, his daughter Helène has made her mark in marine biochemistry in California in the U.S.A.

The bibliography contains 112 numbers until the end of August 1997 (a number of these with foreign co-authors) and the list of new taxa described [a total of 167, i.e.

Figs 6-7. Portraits of Willem Vervoort. 6, Vervoort in his office in the museum in the early sixties; 7, portrait of Willem Vervoort painted by Lenie Noyen (Leiden) in 1982 on the occasion of his retirement as museum director.

Hydrozoa 97 (genera 4, species 89, subspecies 3, variety 1) and Copepoda 70 (family 1, subfamily 1, genera 11, species 57) - many in conjunction with foreign colleagues] was supplied by Dr. Vervoort himself.

Acknowledgements

The photographic section of the museum is acknowledged for photographs and various colleagues in the museum (particularly Dr L.B. Holthuis) and the university have kindly read through the manuscript of this paper and have offered substantial comments and valuable assistance for which the author is grateful. Dr P. Cornelius of the Natural History Museum (London) has also greatly contributed to this paper. Other data on life and work of Dr Vervoort are to be found in Dullemeijer (1976: 12, 35, 52, 56, 64, 77, 95) and Holthuis (1995: 120, 144, 150-151).

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List of new taxa introduced by W. Vervoort (and co-authors)

Cnidaria: Hydrozoa

- Abietinaria immersa* Vervoort, 1993
Acryptolaria conferta minor Ramil & Vervoort, 1992
Antarctoscyphus Peña Cantero, García Carrascosa & Vervoort, 1997
Antarctoscyphus asymmetricus Peña Cantero, García Carrascosa & Vervoort, 1997
Antarctoscyphus encarnae Peña Cantero, García Carrascosa & Vervoort, 1997
Candelabrum serpentarii Segonzac & Vervoort, 1995
Cladocarpus anonymus Ramil & Vervoort, 1992
Cladocarpus boucheti Ramil & Vervoort, 1992
Cladocarpus corneliusi Ramil & Vervoort, 1992
Cladocarpus indicus Rees & Vervoort, 1987
Cladocarpus inflatus Vervoort, 1966
Cladocarpus millardae Vervoort, 1966
Cladocarpus paraventricosus Ramil & Vervoort, 1992
Cladocarpus sewelli Rees & Vervoort, 1987
Cladocarpus sinuosus Vervoort, 1966
Cladocarpus sinuosus var. *edentatus* Vervoort, 1966
Cladocarpus stechowi Ramil & Vervoort, 1992
Dictyocladium biseriale Vervoort, 1993
Filellum disaggregatum Peña Cantero, García Carrascosa & Vervoort, 1998
Gonaxia Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia amphorifera Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia ampullacea Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia ampullacea var. *densa* Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia anonyma Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia bulbifera Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia compacta Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia complexa Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia constricta Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia crrassa Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia crassicaulis Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia crusgalli Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia elegans Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia errans Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia intermedia Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia pachyclados Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia perplexa Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia persimilis Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia robusta Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia scalariformis Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia similis Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia sinuosa Vervoort, 1993
Gonaxia stricta Vervoort, 1993
Halecium jaederholmi Vervoort, 1972
Halecium profundum Calder & Vervoort, 1998
Halopteris infundibulum Vervoort, 1966
Hebella ritchiei Vervoort, 1959
Hydrodendron tottoni Rees & Vervoort, 1987
Laomedea (Eulaomedea) pseudodichotoma Vervoort, 1959
Oswaldella delicata Peña Cantero, Svoboda & Vervoort, 1997
Oswaldella elongata Peña Cantero, García Carrascosa & Vervoort, 1995
Oswaldella encarnae Peña Cantero, Svoboda & Vervoort, 1997
Oswaldella garciacarrascosai Peña Cantero, Svoboda & Vervoort, 1997
Oswaldella gracilis Peña Cantero, Svoboda & Vervoort, 1997
Oswaldella grandis Peña Cantero, Svoboda & Vervoort, 1997
Oswaldella incognita Peña Cantero, Svoboda & Vervoort, 1997
Oswaldella obscura Peña Cantero, Svoboda & Vervoort, 1997
Oswaldella rigida Peña Cantero, Svoboda & Vervoort, 1997
Oswaldella terranova Peña Cantero & Vervoort, 1996
Oswaldella tottoni Peña Cantero & Vervoort, 1996
Papilionella Antsulevich & Vervoort, 1993
Papilionella pterophora Antsulevich & Vervoort, 1993
Plicatotheca anitae Calder & Vervoort, 1986
Plumularia falcicula Ramil & Vervoort, 1992
Plumularia singularis Vervoort, 1941
Pseudoplumaria Ramil & Vervoort, 1992
Pseudoplumaria sabinae Ramil & Vervoort, 1992
Schizotricha jaederholmi Peña Cantero & Vervoort, 1996
Schizotricha nana Peña Cantero, Svoboda & Vervoort, 1996
Sertularella acutidentata profunda Vervoort, 1993
Sertularella anguina Vervoort, 1993
Sertularella billardi Vervoort, 1993
Sertularella bipectinata Vervoort, 1993
Sertularella helenae Vervoort, 1993
Sertularella leiocarpoides Vervoort, 1993
Sertularella novaecaledoniae Vervoort, 1993
Sertularella paucicostata Vervoort, 1993
Sertularella pseudocostata Vervoort, 1993
Sertularella undulitheca Vervoort, 1959
Sertularella whitei Rees & Vervoort, 1987

- Staurotheca australis* Peña Cantero, Svoboda & Vervoort, 1997
Staurotheca frigida Peña Cantero, Svoboda & Vervoort, 1997
Staurotheca glomulosa Peña Cantero, Svoboda & Vervoort, 1997
Staurotheca nonscripta Peña Cantero, Svoboda & Vervoort, 1997
Staurotheca plana Peña Cantero, Svoboda & Vervoort, 1997
Staurotheca polarsterni Peña Cantero, Svoboda & Vervoort, 1997
Stegopoma bathyale Vervoort, 1966
Symplectoscyphus bathyalis Vervoort, 1972
Symplectoscyphus bathypacificus Vervoort, 1993
Symplectoscyphus commensalis Vervoort, 1993
Symplectoscyphus effusus Vervoort, 1993
Symplectoscyphus johnstoni tropicus Vervoort, 1993
Symplectoscyphus pseudocolumnarius Vervoort, 1993
Symplectoscyphus ralphae Vervoort, 1993
Symplectoscyphus watsonae Vervoort, 1993
 (?)*Thecocarpus furcatus* Vervoort, 1941 [= *Lytocarpia furcata* (Vervoort, 1941)]
Thyroscyphus scorpioides Vervoort, 1993
Zygophylax echinata Calder & Vervoort, 1998
Zygophylax leloupi Ramil & Vervoort, 1992
Zygophylax millardae Rees & Vervoort, 1987
Zygophylax tottoni Rees & Vervoort, 1987
- Crustacea: Copepoda**
- Acanthocolax* Vervoort, 1969
Acanthocolax similis Vervoort, 1969
Aetideopsis trichechus Vervoort, 1949
Bomolochoides Vervoort, 1962
Candacia maxima Vervoort, 1957
Ceratocolax Vervoort, 1965
Ceratocolax euthynni Vervoort, 1965
Cornucalanus robustus Vervoort, 1957
Cornucalanus sewelli Vervoort, 1957
Dactylopodella incerta Vervoort, 1964
Dicrobomolochus Vervoort, 1969
Ectinosoma acutorostratum Vervoort, 1962
Euaetideus australis Vervoort, 1957
Euchirella formosa Vervoort, 1949
Euchirella indica Vervoort, 1949
Euchirella splendens Vervoort, 1963
Eudactylopus andrewi atlanticus Vervoort, 1964
Euryte pseudorobusta Vervoort, 1964
Gaedius robustus Vervoort, 1949
Harpacticus confusus Vervoort, 1964
Hemicyclops thalassius Vervoort & Ramírez, 1966
Holobomolochus Vervoort, 1969
Ifanella Vervoort, 1964
Ifanella chasei Vervoort, 1964
Laophonte ifalukensis Vervoort, 1964
Laophonte ifalukensis var. *brevipes* Vervoort, 1964
Leptomesochra pygmaea Vervoort, 1964
Microlaophonte Vervoort, 1964
Microlaophonte spongicola Vervoort, 1964
Nothobomolochus Vervoort, 1962
Nothobomolochus epulus Vervoort, 1962
Onchocalanus scotti Vervoort, 1950
Onchocalanus wolfendeni Vervoort, 1950
Onychocamptus gladiator Vervoort, 1964
Orbitacolax analogus Vervoort, 1969
Orbitacolax oniscoides Vervoort, 1969
Orthopsyllus dubius Vervoort, 1964
Orthopyllus pectinicauda Vervoort, 1964
Paiuella Vervoort, 1965
Paiuella inaciae Vervoort, 1965
Parabomolochus Vervoort, 1962
Parabomolochus anonymus Vervoort, 1965
Parabomolochus globiceps Vervoort & Ramírez, 1968
Parabomolochus mycterobius Vervoort, 1965
Parabomolochus psettobius Vervoort, 1962
Paralaophonte obscura Vervoort, 1962
Paralaophonte pilosoma Vervoort, 1964
Paralaophonte spinicauda Vervoort, 1964
Paramphiascella pacifica Vervoort, 1962
Perissocope bayeri Vervoort, 1964
Pholenota Vervoort, 1964
Pholenota spatulifera Vervoort, 1964
Porcellidium malleatum Vervoort, 1964
Pseudochirella biloba Vervoort, 1949
Pseudochirella gibbera Vervoort, 1949
Pseudochirella mawsoni Vervoort, 1957
Pseudochirella semispina Vervoort, 1949
Pseudocletopsyllus Vervoort, 1964
Pseudocletopsyllus spiniger Vervoort, 1964
Pseudocyclops pacificus Vervoort, 1964
Racovitzanus erraticus Vervoort, 1957
Scolecithricella (Amallothrix) dentipes Vervoort, 1951
Scolecithricella (Amallothrix) marquesae Vervoort, 1965
Scolecocalanus stocki Vervoort, 1990
Scutellidium dentipes Vervoort, 1964
Snelliaetideus Vervoort, 1949
Snelliaetideus arcuatus Vervoort, 1949
Spinocalanidae Vervoort, 1951
Tisbe acanthifera Vervoort, 1962
Tuccinae Vervoort, 1962