

Review of *Pseudopleonexes* Conlan, 1982, With a New Species from Australia (Crustacea: Amphipoda: Ampithoidae)

JEAN JUST

Museum of Tropical Queensland,
78–102 Flinders Street, Townsville Queensland 4810, Australia
jeanjust@bigpond.com

ABSTRACT. *Pseudopleonexes sheardi* n.sp. is reported from South Australia. This is the second named species in the genus known previously only from New Zealand. Conlan's (1982) original diagnosis of the genus (type species *Pleonexes lessoniae* Hurley, 1954) and the diagnosis in Barnard & Karaman (1991) differ in several respects. Thirty-six characters from those diagnoses and from *Pseudopleonexes sheardi* are compared in a table, and a number of those characters are discussed. *Pseudopleonexes sheardi* differs from Conlan's diagnosis in the palm of gnathopod 1 being slightly oblique rather than transverse, and in the reduced palp of maxilla 1 having a single article rather than 2. In view of several synapomorphies identified, those differences do not warrant separate generic recognition of *P. sheardi*. A new diagnosis of *Pseudopleonexes* is given. Specimens from New Zealand referred to *P. lessoniae* by Barnard (1972, as *Ampithoe (Pleonexes) lessoniae*) are discussed. The specimens probably represent two separate species, neither belonging to *P. lessoniae*. Further material is required to confirm or reject their inclusion in *Pseudopleonexes*.

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Ampithoid amphipods are common in marine shallow water algal and sea grass beds in all but the coldest parts of the world oceans. Most are relatively large, more than 10 mm, and belong in widely distributed genera. Many build loose abodes of silk and detritus among blades, while others are leaf curlers; a few build transportable abodes of leaf cuttings, or bore into algal stems. Australian ampithoids are poorly known, and until recently were difficult to identify. Poore & Lowry (1997) clarified some long standing problems and described five new species from New South Wales. Just (2000) described two new species from southern Australia.

Hurley (1954) described a new species of Ampithoidae, *Pleonexes lessoniae*, from New Zealand. Three specimens from New Zealand were referred to *Ampithoe (Pleonexes)*

lessoniae (Hurley, 1954) by Barnard (1972). Conlan (1982) created the new genus, *Pseudopleonexes*, for *Pleonexes lessoniae*. Barnard & Karaman (1991) presented an expanded diagnosis of *Pseudopleonexes*.

The discovery, in southern Australia, of an undescribed species similar to *P. lessoniae*, but differing in some characters used by Conlan (1982) in her diagnosis of the genus, prompted this review of the genus.

The length of animals was measured from the middorsal front margin of the cephalon along the curvature of the dorsum to the apex of the telson. The material is in the Australian Museum, Sydney. Superscript numbers throughout this work key to bold character numbers in Table 1.