

Some Desmids from southern Chile

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With 6 plates in the text

Abstract: An examination of some samples collected in southern Chile in 1998 and 1999, revealed 62 desmid taxa of which a majority was of a cosmopolitan nature. Desmids representing 12 genera were found with the largest numbers of species belonging, as usually expected, to *Closterium* (17), *Cosmarium* (14) and *Staurastrum* (13). Two species have been found in Chile for the first time, these being *Cosmarium beatum* previously only found in southern Africa and Madagascar, and *Staurastrum wildemani* var. *majus* previously confined to Africa, Indonesia and northern Australia. *Xanthidium smithii* var. *crucencis* seems to be part of a very tiny group of truly endemic desmids so far found in Chile while *Cosmarium pseudoinsigne* var. *minus* has been proposed as a new variety. It is hoped that the illustrations provided, nearly all showing, where appropriate, vertical and side views, will supplement some older figures which for one reason or another may be considered inadequate.

Key words: Desmids, Chile, Laguna San Rafael, Coyhaique.

Introduction

Some of the earliest taxonomic records of the desmids of Chile were produced some hundred years ago by BORGE (1901,1906) based on samples collected in southern Patagonia. In later years THOMASSON (1955,1957), ASPREY et al. (1964) and THEODULUZ (1981) made important contributions from the same region. ESPINOSA(1917), PARRA & GONZALES (1977),THOMASSON (1963), DÜRRSCHMIDT (1973), PARRA (1973, 1975, 1977), PARRA et al. (1974, 1976, 1981, 1983), ESPINOSA (1923) and NAVARRO & AVARIA (1971) made valuable studies from more northerly parts of the country although in some cases desmids were only a part of the algal groups reported.

As a visiting specialist to the Raleigh International Base at Coyhaique in southern Chile, Dr. D. M.JOHN of The Natural History Museum, London, kindly provided the author with a few small samples collected from various ponds in mid January 1998 and mid February 1999. The samples came from the Laguna San Rafael National Park and a pond near Coyhaique, and because the taxonomic