

DIATOMS FROM MARINE COASTAL ENVIRONMENTS OF ARGENTINA. SPECIES OF THE GENUS *PLEUROSIGMA* (PLEUROSIGMATACEAE)

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This study focuses on the analysis of the morphology, taxonomy and distribution of species belonging to the diatom genus *Pleurosigma* W. Smith found in marine coastal waters of Argentina. Net samples were collected from the surface layer of the water column at several coastal stations in Buenos Aires and Río Negro Provinces. Unprocessed and cleaned materials were examined by light and scanning electron microscopy. Species identified were *Pleurosigma decorum* W. Smith, *P. distinguendum* Hustedt, *P. exemptum* Mann, *P. inflatum* Shadbolt, *P. inscriptura* M. A. Harper, *P. normanii* Ralfs and *P. simonsenii* Hasle. Two new taxa are described. *Pleurosigma patagonicum* var. *paucistriatum* nov. var. is compared with type material of *Pleurosigma patagonicum* (Ferrario & Sar) Sterrenburg & Sar var. *patagonicum* and *P. perlucidum* nov. spec. is compared with *P. elongatum* W. Smith, *P. delicatulum* W. Smith, *P. amara* Stidolph and *P. brunii* H. Peragallo based on type materials and/or protologues. New observations on *Pleurosigma decorum*, *P. distinguendum*, *P. inflatum*, *P. inscriptura* and *P. normanii* are included and differences from related species are discussed. *P. inflatum* is recorded for the first time from Argentina and *Pleurosigma distinguendum* and *P. inscriptura* are recorded for first time from the South Atlantic Ocean.