

Preliminary analysis of new records of *Plocamium* species for the South African East Coast

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Of the 16 *Plocamium* species recorded from the Indian Ocean, 9 occur in South Africa. The greatest diversity within this taxon is found on the South coast (between Cape Point and Port Elizabeth, viz. 8), while only 4 have been reported from the East coast viz. *Plocamium affine* Kützing, *P. beckeri* Schmitz ex Simons, *P. collarhiza* (Turner) Hooker & Harvey and *P. suhrii* Kützing. Two new records and two potential new species have been found during recent collections on the KwaZulu-Natal and Transkei coasts. *Plocamium telfairiae* (Hooker & Harvey) Harvey ex Kützing, a species described from Mauritius and reported from Mozambique, was found in northern KwaZulu-Natal. This species is morphologically variable, having at least three discernable forms. One of these forms bears a resemblance to *P. sandvicense* J. Agardh. Also, a number of specimens resembling *Plocamium abnorme* f. *uncinatum* Okamura were collected. Okamura later transferred this species to *P. telfairiae*, but there is some doubt as to whether this form is a new species or not. *Plocamium* cf. *microcladioides* South & Adams, a New Zealand endemic, was also found within the study area. Our material was slightly narrower than the described specimen and exhibited some characteristics of *P. beckeri* and *P. cartilagineum* (Linnaeus) Dixon. *Plocamium* cf. *mertensii*, a relatively large low intertidal to shallow subtidal species; and *Plocamium* sp. 1, a relatively small, recent, deep subtidal species, are described. The establishment of new species will be proposed once the relevant type material has been studied.