



The peanut-shaped sternaspid polychaetes have been known since 1760 when Plancus named them as *Mentula cucurbitacea marina*.

Sternaspids are common and abundant in soft bottoms. Some authors suggested that only one species should be recognized, whereas others regard a few species very widely distributed and variable depths.

Delineating species was problematic; the ventro-caudal shield was disregarded or barely used for identifying species. In this contribution the ventral shield is evaluated and its diagnostic potential is confirmed.

The revision of *Sternaspis* is based upon type or topotype materials. Sternaspid body, introvert hooks and shield show three distinct patterns: two genera have 7 abdominal segments and tapered introvert hooks, and one genus has 8 abdominal segments and spatulate introvert hooks. The ventro-caudal shield has 3 different patterns: stiff with ribs, and sometimes concentric lines, stiff with feebly-defined ribs but no concentric lines, and soft with firmly adhered sediment particles.

Sternaspis is restricted to include species with 7 abdominal segments, falcate introvert hooks, and stiff shields, often exhibiting radial ribs, concentric lines or both.

Two new genera incorporate the remaining species: *Caulleryaspis* has falcate introvert hooks, 7 abdominal segments, and soft shields with sediment particles firmly adhered on them.

Petersenaspis has spatulate introvert hooks, 8 abdominal segments, and stiff shields with poorly-defined ribs but no concentric line.

The geographic range of most species is smaller than previously indicated. Keys to genera and to all species are also included.

REVISION OF *STERNASPIS* OTTO, 1821 (POLYCHAETA, STERNASPIDAE)

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Sternaspis andamanensis Sendall & Salazar-Vallejo sp. n.

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