PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF MARINE MAMMAL PARASITES FROM THE NORTHERN CARIBBEAN

Antonio A. Mignucci-Giannoni¹, Ernest H. Williams, Jr.², Eric P. Hoberg³ and Cathy A. Beck⁴

¹Red Caribeña de Varamientos – Caribbean Stranding Network, P.O. Box 38030, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00937-1030

²Department of Marine Sciences, University of Puerto Rico, P.O. Box 908, Lajas, Puerto Rico 00667-0908

³U.S. Department of Agriculture, Biosystematic Parasitology Laboratory, Beltsville, Maryland 01795

⁴Sirenia Project, National Biological Service, 412 Northeast 16th Avenue, Room 250, Gainesville, Florida 32601-3701

The parasite fauna of marine mammals of the northeastern Caribbean has not previously been documented. Parasites were collected from dead marine mammals salvaged by the Caribbean Stranding Network and other researchers in Puerto Rico and the U.S. and British Virgin Islands. Specimens of each parasite found were fixed in 10% buffered formalin and then stored in 70% ethanol. Parasites were obtained from 32 individuals of 10 specimens of marine mammals (nine cetaceans, one sirenian). Nineteen species of parasites were recorded, including seven nematodes, two digeneans, four cestodes, two acanthocephalans, two barnacles, and two amphipods. All records are new for these islands and the Caribbean. Three represent new host records (Terranova sp. in Kogia breviceps, and Phyllobothrium delphini and Isocyamus cf. delphini in Ziphius cavirostris).