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**Short Communication**

**NEW RECORD OF THE MONOTYPIC GENUS AND SPECIES OF *STYLARAEA* EDWARDS AND HAIME (SCLERACTINIA : PORITIDAE) FROM THE GULF OF MANNAR BIOSPHERE RESERVE**

Family Poritidae includes five genera viz., *Porites*, *Goniopora*, *Stylaraea*, *Alveopora* and *Poritopora*. Edwards and Haime (1851) first described the genus *Stylaraea*, which was synonymised with *Porites* in 1860. Later Klunzinger (1879) treated this as a separate genus. Veron and Pichon, (1982) described *Stylaraea* as the smallest of all scleractinian corals in the world, being not more than 15 mm in size. Genus *Stylaraea* is a monospecific genus (Veron, 2000). The present report deals with the new record of *Stylaraea punctata* from the Shingle Island of Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve (GoMBR), Tamil Nadu.

**DESCRIPTION**

Phylum CNIDARIA

Class ANTHOZOA

Subclass ZOANTHARIA De Blainville, 1830

Order SCLERACTINIA Bourne, 1905

Family PORITIDAE Gray, 1842

Genus *Stylaraea* Edwards and Haime, 1851

The family Poritidae is colonial and hermatypic and are mostly extant. Colony formation is primarily by extra-tentacular budding. Corallites have porous walls of clearly differentiated synapticulae and trabeculae and corallites are closely compacted with little coenosteum. Among the five genera reported in the world, except *Stylaraea* and *Poritopora*, all the other genera are reported in India (Venkataraman *et al.*, 2003).

***Stylaraea punctata* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

(Figs. 1 &amp; 2)

1834. *Porites punctata* (Linnaeus) Ehrenberg. Phys. Abh. Konigl. Akad. Wissensch. Berlin aus d. Jahre 1832, p. 342.
1879. *Stylaraea punctata* (Linnaeus) Klunzinger. Berlin, p. 236, pl. 5/27.
1905. *Porites punctata* (Linnaeus) Bernard. Cat. Madreporarian Corals Br. Mus. (Nat. Hist.) 5, p. 11 & 161.
1952. *Stylaraea punctata* (Linnaeus) Crossland. Sci. Rep. Great Barrier Reef Exped. 1928-29. Br. Mus. (Nat. Hist.), 6(3), p. 236.
1982. *Stylaraea punctata* (Linnaeus) Veron and Pichon. Australian *Inst. of Mar. Sci.*, Australia. Vol. 5, 63-64.
1983. *Porites punctata* (Klunzinger) Scheer and Pillai. *Zoologica*, p. 100.
2000. *Stylaraea punctata* (Linnaeus) Veron. *Australian Inst. of Mar. Sci.*, Australia, 3 : p. 346.

**Material :** During the coral reef status survey of GoMBR (January 2003), two colonies were collected in the intertidal reef flat from the Eastern part of the Shingle Island (lat. 9°14'39" N; long. 79°13'23" E) (Reg. No. ZSI/MBS-C/0011 & ZSI/MBS-C/0012 dt. 21.08.03), GoMBR by K.P. Raghuram, Marine Biological Station, Zoological Survey of India, Chennai.

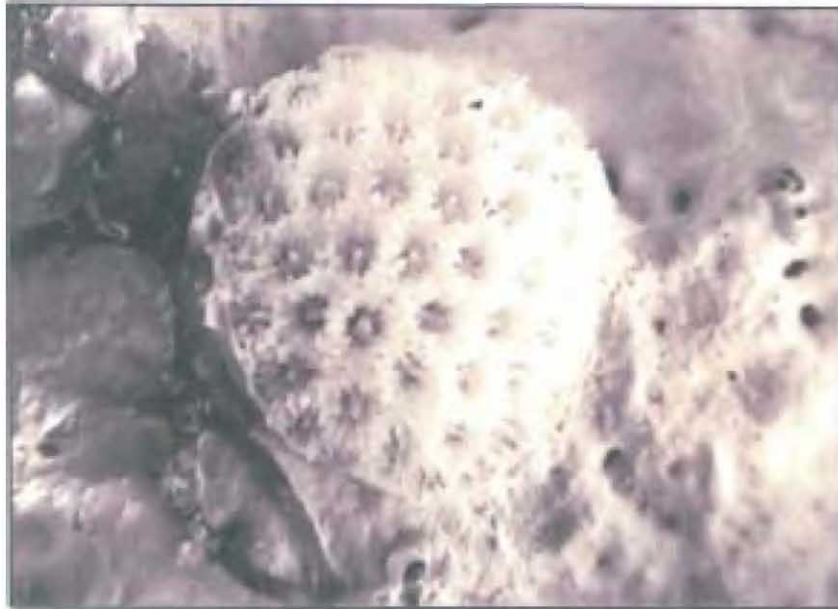
**Characters :** Colonies are encrusting and attached on the dead corals, and are more or less circular in shape. The size of two colonies is 7.01 and 9.14 mm in diameter respectively. Corallites are evenly arranged. Septa are in 2 cycles of 6 each (Fig. 2). Corallites are 1.26 mm in diameter. Calices are 0.6 mm in diameter (Fig. 1). The corallites are highly echinulate, walls are thick. Columella is style like in appearance, and lack in some corallites. The columella is 0.12 mm in diameter.

**Distribution :** The present species has so far been recorded from the Red Sea, Tulear, Aldabra, Moluccas and the Great Barrier Reef (Veron and Pichon, 1982). Scheer and Pillai (1983) recorded the present species only from the Red sea and it is a new record to India.

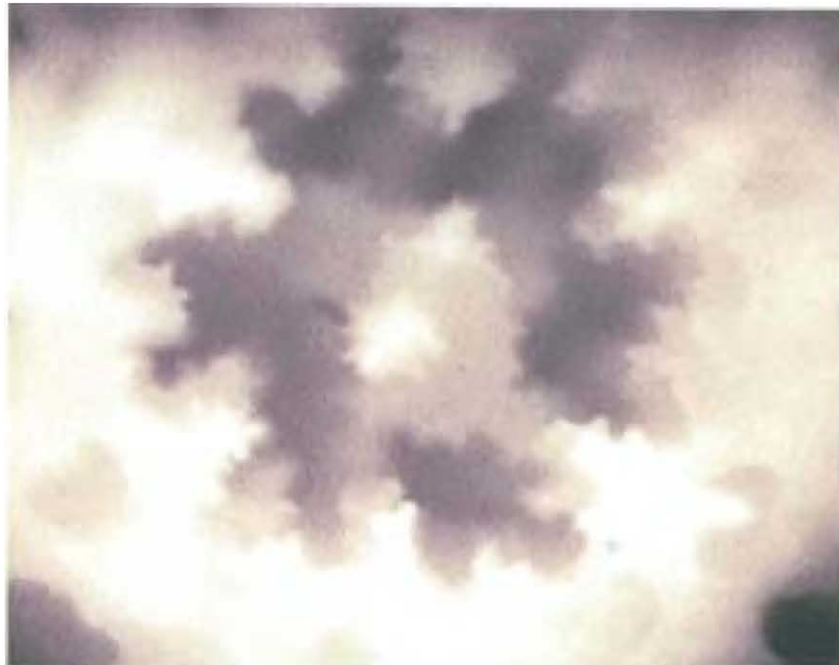
**Remarks :** The present species is collected from the Shingle Island, Gulf of Mannar. Though 15 families, including 60 genera are reported from India (Venkataraman, *et al.*, 2003), the genus *Stylaraea* has not been listed in this. The present report adds one more genus to the Indian fauna. It was found in the intertidal region where the dead corals were dominant. Colonies were collected from 1.5 m depth.

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**Fig. 1.** : *Stylaraea punctata* on a dead coral.



**Fig. 2.** : Enlarged view of *S. punctata* corallite.

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