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ON TWO SPECIES OF CRINOIDEA, ECHINODERMATA FROM LAKSHADWEEP, ARABIAN SEA

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INTRODUCTION

While describing the echinoderm fauna of Lakshadweep James (1989) and Sastry (1991) reported no crinoids though, several are known from the nearby Maldives. However, James (op. cit.) could collect only a few bits of crinoid arms which could not be identified. Recently, one of us (ChS) while SCUBA diving at Lakshadweep atolls, collected two specimens of Crinoidea belonging to two species from the reef slopes which could be identified and a few arm bits of a third species which could not be identified. Thus, the two species of Crinoidea are additions to the echinoderm fauna of these atolls. Since the species are already known from the Indian coast, these are briefly described.

Phylum ECHINODERMATA

Class CRINOIDEA

Order COMASTERIDA

Family COMASTERIDAE

1. *Comatella nigra* (P.H. Carpenter)

(Fig. 1)

1876. *Actinometra nigra* Carpenter, P.H. *Journ. Anat. Physiol.*, **10** : 583.

1888. *Actinometra nigra* : Carpenter, P.H. "*Challenger*" *Reports, Zoology*, Vol. **26** : 304.

2007. *Comaterlla nigra* : Sastry, D.R.K. *Rec. zool. Surv. India, Occ. Paper No.*, **271** : 8.

Material : Kavaratti Island, upper reef slope outside the lagoon, 30 m, 19.04.2008, one specimen.

Description : Arms 38 in number, 80-100 mm long, terminal segments of proximal pinnules forming a comb. P₁ on second brachial segment, first brachial syzygy at 3 + 4. Br series of two ossicles, most II Br series with two III Br series. Cirri about 20, each of about 30 segments with tubercles on the dorsal side.

Distribution : India : Andamans (Sastry, 2007) and Lakshadweep.

Elsewhere : East Indies, Philippines, South China Sea and North Australia (Clark and Rowe, 1971).

***Comatella stelligera* (P.H. Carpenter)**

(Fig. 2)

1880. *Actinometra stelligera* Carpenter, P.H. *J. Linn. Soc (Zool.)*, **15** : 198.

2007. *Comatella stelligera* : Sastry, D.R.K. *Rec. zool. Surv. India, Occ. Paper No.*, **271** : 9.

Material : Kavaratti Island, upper reef slope outside the lagoon, 30 m, 19.04.2008, one specimen.

Remarks : Differs from *C. nigra* in having III Br series only on outer side of II Br. Arms 80-100 mm long; cirri more than 30 in number with more than 40 segments each.

Distribution : India : Tamil Nadu, Andamans (Sastry, 2007) and Lakshadweep.

Elsewhere : Bay of Bengal to South China Sea and North Australia (Clark and Rowe, 1971).

SUMMARY

Recent SCUBA diving collections from Kavaratti Island of Lakshadweep contained two species of Crinoidea, *Comatella nigra* and *C. stelligera*. This is the first report of Crinoidea from these islands. The finding also extends the distribution of the both the species westward into the Arabian Sea.

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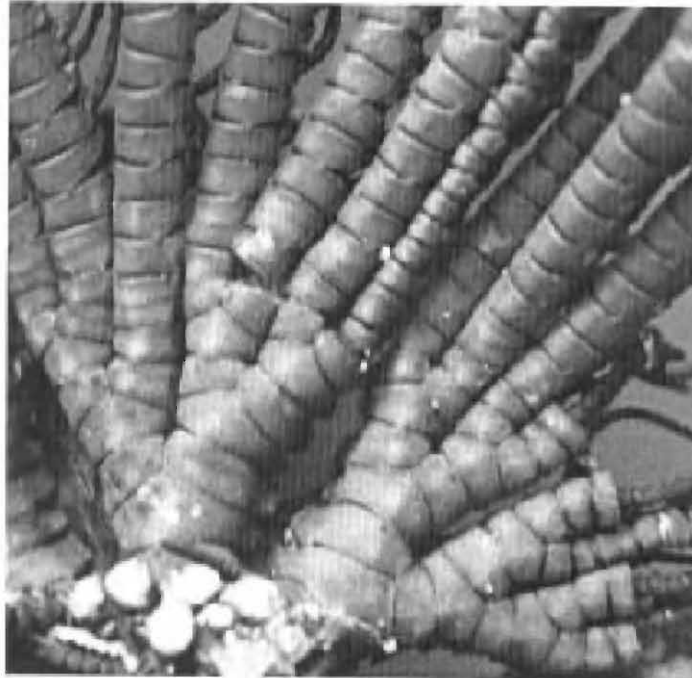


Fig. 1. *Comatella nigra*



Fig. 2. *Comatella stelligera*

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