NEW DISTRIBUTIONAL RECORDS OF MURICID SNAILs (MOLLUSCA: GASTROPODA) FROM THE ARABIAN SEA

Sary, P.S. and Pramod Kiran, R.B.*
Dept. of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries, University of Kerala, Karyavattom, Thiruvananthapuram-695581, Kerala, India
*Email: pramodkiranrb@keralauniversity.ac.in

Abstract: New distributional records of four species of muricid gastropods namely Lataxiena solenosteiroides Houart, Fraussen & Barbier, 2013; Murex aduncospinosus G. B. Sowerby II, 1841; Chicoreus cnissodus ceylonensis Houart, 2015 and Indothais javanica (Philippi, 1848) collected from off Kerala Coast, Arabian Sea are presented in this paper.

INTRODUCTION
Muricids are the most diversified as well as taxonomically complex assemblage of neogastropod molluscs belonging to the superfamily Muricoidea within the family Muricidae, which consists of purpuras, murex and rock shells; the shape is uneven, normally by means of a raised spire as well as strong sculpture with spiral ridges and axial varices (3 or more in number on each whorl), often bearing spines, tubercles or blade-like processes (Poutiers, 1998). The members of the family are carnivorous and feed mainly on barnacles, other molluscs, crustaceans and small fishes (Rao, 2003). Being predators, they play a significant role in the structuring of marine intertidal communities (Menge, 1974; Morton, 1999, 2004; Peharla and Morton, 2005; Harding et al., 2007). According to the recent classification (Bouchet and Rocroi, 2005), the Muricidae is composed of 10 subfamilies; of these, Muricinae is the largest subfamily which includes the common murex snails. Tripathy & Mukhopadhyay (2015) reviewed the studies on diversity of molluscs in India and have listed 89 species of muricids recorded from the Indian coast. This article documents four new distributional records of muricid gastropods from the Arabian Sea.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
Muricids caught in shrimp trawls operated along Neendakara fishing harbor, south west coast of India (8°35'N and 75°38'E) were used for the study. Colouration and morphometric measurements (Aerospace digital caliper, USA) were recorded soon after collection. The specimens were identified following Ponder and Vokes (1988), Tan and Sigurdsson (1996), Houart (2015), and Houart et al. (2015) and the identifications were verified and confirmed by the experts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The species Chicoreus (Triplex) cnissodus ceylonensis is a subspecies of Chicoreus (Triplex) cnissodus which was previously recorded from the Bay of Bengal along the south east coast of India and Sri Lanka by Houart (2015) and Sri Lanka was noted as the type locality for this species. The distributional range of I. javanica is known to be from the east coast of India through the Malayan archipelago and northwards to China and Taiwan (Tan and Sigurdsson, 1996). According to Houart et al. (2015) Lataxiena solenosteiroides occurs from Madras along the south east coast of India and the range extended to Thailand, Pulau Langwaki, Senang Island and Strait of Malacca. The authors also recorded Madras as the type locality of this species. The occurrence of Murex aduncospinosus was formerly recorded from Andaman Islands, Gulf of Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, Hong Kong, China, Japan, Fiji, Taiwan, Tonga and Solomons (Ponder and Vokes, 1988; Rao and Rao, 1993). This is the first distributional record of all these four species from the Arabian Sea.
Systematics
Class: Gastropoda
Subclass: Caenogastropoda
Super Family: Muricoidea Rafinesque, 1815
Family: Muricidae Rafinesque, 1815
Subfamily: Ergalataxinae Kuroda, Habe & Oyama, 1971
Genus: Lataxiena Jousseaume, 1883
Species: Lataxiena solenosteiroides Houart, Fraussen & Barbier, 2013 (Fig. 1)
Material Examined: One empty shell (shell length 21.58 mm; shell width 11.94 mm; aperture length 6.06 mm; aperture width 3.82 mm).

Genus: Murex Linnaeus, 1758
Species: Murex aduncospinosus G. B. Sowerby II, 1841 (Fig. 3)
Material Examined: One empty shell (shell length 64.97 mm; shell width 25.53 mm; aperture length 12.81 mm; aperture width 8.41 mm).

Genus: Chicoreus Euthyme, 1889
Species: Chicoreus cniisodus Houart, 2015 (Fig. 4)
Material Examined: One empty shell (shell length 49.59 mm; shell width 26.72 mm; aperture length 12.64 mm; aperture width 9.27 mm)

Genus: Indothais Claremont, Vermeij, Williams & Reid, 2013
Species: Indothais javanica (Philippi, 1848) (Fig. 2)
Material Examined: One empty shell (shell length 25.72 mm; shell width 16.41 mm; aperture length 8.72 mm; aperture width 5.21 mm)

Fig. 1 Lataxiena solenosteiroides  
Fig. 2 Indothais javanica
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Fig. 3. Murex aduncospinosus

Fig. 4. Chicoreus cnissodus ceylonensis

REFERENCES


