

## PORIFERA AND BRACHIOPODA OF CHRISTMAS ISLAND

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Sponges collected during the Western Australian Museum Expedition to Christmas Island in February 1987 were not identified, as no sponge taxonomist was available. This material will be identified in the future and published in the *Records of the Western Australian Museum*.

Historically the sponges of Christmas Island have received some attention. Dendy (1887) described a new species of sponge, *Pachychalina spinosissima* (now *Callyspongia spinosissima*), the only specimen of sponge collected by H.M.S. 'Flying Fish' in 1887.

Kirkpatrick (1900) described a collection of 32 species of sponges, collected by Andrews during 1897 and 1898 from Flying Fish Cove. Seven species were described as new: *Pseudosuberites andrewsi*, *Tethya affinis*, *Microciona dubia*, *Stylotella irregularis*, *Rhizochalina sessilis*, *Reniera innominata* and *Petrosia exigua*. In addition two new varieties were described: *Spirastrella decumbens* Ridley var. *robusta* and *Iotrochota baculifera* Ridley var. *tumescens*. The type locality for the new species and varieties was Flying Fish Cove.

*Tethya affinis* has since been synonymised with *Tethya deformis* Thiele 1898, *Microciona dubia* is now *Clathria (Thalysias) dubia*, *Stylotella irregularis* is now *Axinosis irregularis*, *Rhizochalina sessilis* is now *Oceanapia sessilis*, *Reniera innominata* is now *Haliclona innominata* and *Petrosia exigua* is now *Xestospongia exigua* (Hooper and Wiedenmayer, 1994). The variety *Iotrochota baculifera* var. *tumescens* is now *Iotrochota baculifera* (Hooper and Wiedenmayer, 1994).

A new genus and species, *Murrayona phanolepis*, was described by Kirkpatrick (1911) from specimens obtained from a rock brought up by a ship's anchor from 46 fathoms off Christmas Island, collected by Andrews in 1908. Most of the sponges

in the above collections are small specimens, as are the majority in the present collection, apart from a few encrusting species which grow to a considerable size. Sponges do not form a major part of the fauna of the Christmas Island coral reefs.

Of interest is the occurrence of sclerosponges under ledges off Winifred Beach.

A single species of brachiopod *Thecidellina blochmanni* (Dall, 1920), with its type locality Christmas Island, is recorded from the island. This is the only recorded locality for this species, which is a small articulate brachiopod with the shell attached by cementation, without a pedicle. Several specimens were obtained by the 1987 expedition from the underside of a coral *Leptoseris* sp. from 29 metres depth off West White Beach.

### REFERENCES

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