

## A new Indo-West Pacific species of *Actinopyga* (Holothuroidea: Aspidochirotida: Holothuriidae)

YVES SAMYN<sup>1</sup>, DIDIER VANDENSPIEGEL<sup>2</sup> & CLAUDE MASSIN<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Belgian National Focal Point to the Global Taxonomy Initiative, Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Vautierstraat 29, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium. E-mail: yves.samyn@naturalsciences.be

<sup>2</sup>Department of Invertebrates, Royal Museum for Central Africa, Leuvensesteenweg 13, B-3080 Tervuren, Belgium

<sup>3</sup>Department of Invertebrates, Section Malacology, Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Vautierstraat 29, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium

### Abstract

*Actinopyga* is one of the five genera commonly recognised in the family Holothuriidae. This small genus has sixteen species currently considered valid. The present paper describes a new Indo-West Pacific species, *Actinopyga caerulea*, of which the most striking character is its bluish coloration. The ossicle assemblage of the new species resembles mostly that of *A. bannwarthi* Panning, 1944 and *A. flammea* Cherbonnier, 1979.

**Key words:** Echinodermata, Holothuroidea, *Actinopyga*, new species, Indo-Pacific

### Introduction

Recent expeditions (in 2003 and 2004) to the Union des Comores, an archipelago in the northern Mozambique Channel, yielded several specimens of a species that had previously been photographed at several localities in the Pacific Ocean (Erhardt & Moosleitner 1995; Erhardt & Baensch 1998; Lane pers. comm.; Myers pers. comm.; Colin pers. comm.; see also plate 1). Cherbonnier & Féral (1984) recorded, and later Féral and Cherbonnier (1986) published a photograph of a specimen from New Caledonia which they identified incorrectly as *Actinopyga crassa* Panning, 1944. Other specimens have been photographed and no voucher material collected, making definitive identification impossible. Erhardt & Moosleitner (1995) identified their photographed specimen from Thailand as *A. crassa*, Erhardt & Baensch (1998) drew upon the expertise of F.W.E Rowe, who put the name *Actinopyga* (?) *bannwarthi* to their photographed specimen from the Philippines. The recently collected Comoros material, together with a specimen collected earlier in Papua