



## A probably invasive new genus and new species of soft coral (Octocorallia: Alcyonacea: Clavulariidae) from Brazil

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### Abstract

*Stragulum bicolor* n. gen. & n. sp. (Octocorallia: Clavulariidae) is described from Brazil. It was found in shallow waters of the States of Ceará, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Paraná and Santa Catarina, and is probably invasive. The genus forms encrusting sheets on solid objects, such as seaweed basal stems, barnacle shells and artificial substrates. The new taxon has spindles, crosses and radiates in the outer layer of the coenenchyme, fused sclerites in the interior and the polyps are unarmed. The new genus is compared with other taxa that have fused sclerites.

**Key words:** Coelenterata, Cnidaria, benthos, *Stragulum*

### Introduction

From 2002 onwards M.A. Haddad found the species described below in growing numbers, indicating a possible invasive nature. She contacted L.P. van Ofwegen for identification of the material, who suspected it represented a yet undescribed genus. Therefore, one specimen was sent to C.S. McFadden (Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, USA) for molecular study using the CO1 gene. The molecular data confirmed we were dealing with a new genus. The suspected invasive nature of the species has since been further evidenced from past and current data and also by observations of many researchers who have never seen any colonies of this species before on benthic environments along the Brazilian coast.

### Material and methods

The material is deposited in the Netherlands Centre for Biodiversity Naturalis, Darwinweg 2, 2333 CR Leiden, formerly the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden, The Netherlands (RMNH); the Invertebrate Collection of the Museu Nacional do Rio de Janeiro, Quinta da Boa Vista, São Cristóvão, CEP 20940-040, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (MNRJ); the Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paulo, Avenida Nazaré, 481, Ipiranga, CEP 04263-000, São Paulo, Brazil (MZUSP); and in the Cnidaria Collection of the Departamento de Zoologia da Universidade Federal do Paraná, Caixa Postal 19020, CEP 81531-980, Curitiba, Brazil (DZoo-Cn). Sclerites were photographed using a JEOL 6480LV Scanning Electron Microscope at 10 kV.

### Class Anthozoa Ehrenberg, 1831

### Subclass Octocorallia Haeckel, 1866

### Order Alcyonacea Lamouroux, 1812