

A new species of Plurellidae (Ascidiacea : Phlebobranchia) from Papua New Guinea

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Abstract

Two colonies of a new Plurellidae, *Plurella colini* were collected by SCUBA in the north east and south east of Papua New Guinea. Very similar to the five other species of the genus by the external shape, in balls encrusted with sand, the new species differs in the gut shape and gonad distribution.

Key words : Ascidiaceans, Plurellidae, taxonomy

Introduction

The Plurellidae occupy an unusual place among the phlebobranch ascidians, as a colonial form of this order. Rather recently discovered by Kott (1973) with one species present in South Australia, the genus *Plurella* now comprises five species collected in many parts of the tropical western Pacific (Monniot & Monniot 1996, 2000). This development is due to the numerous SCUBA dives of the team of the Coral Reef Research Foundation with Patrick and Lori Colin, to whom this species is dedicated.

***Plurella colini* n. sp.**

Material : Papua New Guinea, Manus Province, Ndrova Island, 2°12.86'S-147°13.68'E, 30 m, 24/6/2003. Type MNHN P7 PLU.A 5.

Papua New Guinea, Normanby Island, 10°06.33'S-150°57.68'E, 18 m, 19/1/2002.

Description : The colonies (Fig. 1) are totally incrustated with coarse sand and make balls several centimetres in diameter. The siphons are protruding, slightly flaring, with a light brown lining and white yellow stripes along their edge. The pigment of the stripes disappears after fixation. The individuals are parallel, linked by a large part of their lateral