



***Cladonema timmsii*, a new species of hydromedusa (Cnidaria: Hydrozoa) from a salt lake in South Australia**

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Abstract

Cladonema timmsii, **sp. nov.**, is described from Blue Lagoon, an inland saline lake on Eyre Peninsula, near Cactus Beach, due south of Penong, Australia. It is a small medusa with a bell height and diameter of about 2.0mm. It differs from its congeners in having (1) sexually dimorphic gonads, i.e., the males bearing six radially arranged gonadal pouches on the stomach wall, the females lacking gonadal pouches, having instead smooth gonads; (2) different arrangements of nematocyst warts on the main tentacle branches (two rows) and side branches (one row). It is further characterized by having (1) nine simple radial canals, each corresponding with a tentacle bulb bearing a 7-branched stinging tentacle and about six suctorial branches; (2) six oral tentacles with very short stalks, each bearing a terminal nematocyst knob; (3) dark red, lensed ocelli. This is the first report of a species of *Cladonema* from Australian waters; members of the genus are also reported herein from the Northern Territory and New South Wales.

Key words: Cladonematidae, *Cladonema*, hydromedusae, salt-lake, South Australia, new species

Introduction

The non-marine medusan fauna of Australia has been little studied (Zeidler & Gershwin 2004), with only two genera having been recorded: the freshwater, cosmopolitan genus *Craspedacusta*, and the salt lake genus, *Australomedusa*.

Here we describe a new species of *Cladonema*, from Blue Lagoon, a saline lake near Cactus Beach, due south of Penong, just east of the Great Australian Bight. The lake is separated from the sea by high coastal dunes but seems to be fed with marine water by seepages through the dunes because its salinity is close to that of sea water except after heavy rains, and contains other species of marine origin (B.V. Timms, pers. comm.).

This is the first report of a species of *Cladonema* from Australian waters; the genus is also herein reported from the Northern Territory and New South Wales for the first time. Medusae of *Cladonema* tend to be sedentary and are characterised by possessing two types of tentacles on the same tentacle bulb: one type with only one terminal knob, adhesive or suctorial in function, and another group with numerous nematocyst warts, presumed to be feeding tentacles.

Material and methods

Specimens were collected using a hand-held ground net of 1.0mm mesh, passed through beds of the marine/salt lake angiosperm *Ruppia* sp., and were most common in protected bays. They are preserved in 10% formaldehyde/propylene glycol solution and deposited in the South Australian Museum, Adelaide (SAM).