



## RECORD OF THE VENOMOUS VIC WEE'S CONE *CONUS VICWEEI* OLD, 1973 (GASTROPODA: CONIDAE) FROM LAKSHADWEEP SEA

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**Abstract:** This paper documents the record of *Conus vicweei* Old, 1973 for the first time from Indian coastal waters, recording extended distribution of this species from northern to western Indian Ocean.

**Key words:** Conidae, Range extension, Distribution Kerala, Redlist

### INTRODUCTION

Cone snails are the members of a highly diverse marine gastropod family Conidae that are renowned and appreciated for their fast diversification and species richness, exquisite splendour of shells and sophisticated venoms that are potentially dangerous to humans on one hand and beneficial on other hand by virtue of the forms of drugs derived from it (Puillandre *et al.*, 2014). Though cone shells occur throughout the tropical and sub-tropical oceans, they are most numerous within the Indo-West Pacific region; recorded diversity includes 316 species of cone shells from the Indo-Pacific region (Filmer, 2001; Rockel *et al.*, 1995), 73 species from Indian coastal waters (Apte, 2014) and 53 species from the Andaman and Nicobar islands (Apte, 1998, 2012, 2014; Hylleberg and Kilburn, 2002; Rao, 2003; Venkataraman *et al.*, 2004, 2012). Benjamin *et al.* (2009) recorded sixty species of cone shells from the Tamil Nadu, southeast coastal region of India. Of late 17 species of cone shells were recently recorded from Kerala coast by Franklin and Laladhas (2014) and 10 species by Sary *et al.*, (2014). Shell collectors and commercial traders have established good trade made of cone shells in global market (Rice, 2007). *Conus vicweei* is a species with good market prize value globally and has been reported from Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand and Malaysia (Rockel *et al.*, 1995; Kohn, 2013). In the present paper we record the presence of this species from Lakshadweep Sea, southwestern India.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The specimen was collected from the commercial trawlers operating off Kerala coast, India at a depth of about 150-200 m. Identification of specimen was done based on key taxonomic features provided in Old (1973), Rockel *et al.* (1995) and Robin (2008) and measurements were done using digital Vernier Calliper (Aerospace, China). Voucher specimen is deposited in the museum collections of the Department of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries, University of Kerala (DABF/UOK/GAS- 31).

### RESULTS

#### Systematics

Class: Gastropoda

Superfamily: Conoidea

Family: Conidae

***Conus vicweei* Old, 1973** (Figs. 1 a-c)

**Synonyms:** *Conus (Textilia) vicweei* Old, 1973; *Textilia vicweei* (Old, 1973)

**Material Examined:** One specimen; Lakshadweep Sea, off Kerala coast, India; depth 150-200m; Collected by Preetha Karnaver on 10.06.2013. Shell length: 82.41mm; Shell width: 34.76mm; Aperture length: 61.32mm; Aperture width: 7.12mm; Spire height: 16.35mm.

**Description:** Shell moderately large, solid last whorl narrowly ovate, outline convex, aperture wider, shoulder angulate, spire low outline slightly concave. Teleconch sutural ramps flat to slightly concave. Shell colour is violet brown, with variably numerous



**Fig. 1.** *Conus vicweei* (Old, 1973)- a. Dorsal view of shell, b. Ventral view of shell; c. apex

white to cream zigzag shaped arrow lines, through the spiral bands, line pattern reduced outer lip and on ventral side, apex white, sutural ramps with light brown with radial blotches.

## DISCUSSION

*Conus vicweei* was first collected from Sumatra, Indonesia (Old, 1973). The other records of this species are all from the eastern Indian Ocean (Rockel *et al.*, 1995). This deep water species that occurs at depths of 70 to 200 m (Röckel *et al.*, 1995) and the present record of the species from a depth of 150-200m corroborates this observation. This highly traded species with good market price (Rice, 2007) is a common species throughout its range in the Andaman Sea, from the coast of Myanmar south to the Straits of Malacca including the coasts of Thailand, Malaysia, Sumatra and Indonesia, and therefore listed as 'Least Concern' in the IUCN red list (Kohn, 2013). The present record of this species off Kerala coast shows the extended distribution of this species from eastern Indian Ocean to the western Indian Ocean.

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