



NEW DISTRIBUTIONAL RECORDS OF MURICID SNAILS (MOLLUSCA: GASTROPODA) FROM THE ARABIAN SEA

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Abstract: New distributional records of four species of muricid gastropods namely *Lataxiena solenosteiroides* Houart, Fraussen & Barbier, 2013; *Murex aduncospinosus* G. B. Sowerby II, 1841; *Chicoreus cnissodus ceylonensis* Houart, 2015 and *Indothais javanica* (Philippi, 1848) collected from off Kerala Coast, Arabian Sea are presented in this paper.

INTRODUCTION

Muricids are the most diversified as well as taxonomically complex assemblage of neogastropod molluscs belonging to the superfamily Muricoidea within the family Muricidae, which consists of purpuras, murex and rock shells; the shape is uneven, normally by means of a raised spire as well as strong sculpture with spiral ridges and axial varices (3 or more in number on each whorl), often bearing spines, tubercles or blade-like processes (Poutiers, 1998). The members of the family are carnivorous and feed mainly on barnacles, other molluscs, crustaceans and small fishes (Rao, 2003). Being predators, they play a significant role in the structuring of marine intertidal communities (Menge, 1974; Morton, 1999, 2004; Peharda and Morton, 2005; Harding *et al.*, 2007). According to the recent classification (Bouchet and Rocroi, 2005), the Muricidae is composed of 10 subfamilies; of these, Muricinae is the largest subfamily which includes the common murex snails. Tripathy & Mukhopadhyay (2015) reviewed the studies on diversity of molluscs in India and have listed 89 species of muricids recorded from the Indian coast. This article documents four new distributional records of muricid gastropods from the Arabian Sea.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Muricids caught in shrimp trawls operated along Neendakara fishing harbor, south west coast of India (8°35'2 N and 75°38'2 E) were used for the

study. Colouration and morphometric measurements (Aerospace digital caliper, USA) were recorded soon after collection. The specimens were identified following Ponder and Vokes (1988), Tan and Sigurdsson (1996), Houart (2015), and Houart *et al.* (2015) and the identifications were verified and confirmed by the experts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The species *Chicoreus (Triplex) cnissodus ceylonensis* is a subspecies of *Chicoreus (Triplex) cnissodus* which was previously recorded from the Bay of Bengal along the south east coast of India and Sri Lanka by Houart (2015) and Sri Lanka was noted as the type locality for this species. The distributional range of *I. javanica* is known to be from the east coast of India through the Malayan archipelago and northwards to China and Taiwan (Tan and Sigurdsson, 1996). According to Houart *et al.* (2015) *Lataxiena solenosteiroides* occurs from Madras along the south east coast of India and the range extended to Thailand, Pulau Langwaki, Senang Island and Strait of Malacca. The authors also recorded Madras as the type locality of this species. The occurrence of *Murex aduncospinosus* was formerly recorded from Andaman Islands, Gulf of Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, Hong Kong, China, Japan, Fiji, Taiwan, Tonga and Solomons (Ponder and Vokes, 1988; Rao and Rao, 1993). This is the first distributional record of all these four species from the Arabian Sea.

Systematics

Class: Gastropoda

Subclass: Caenogastropoda

Super Family: Muricoidea Rafinesque, 1815

Family: Muricidae Rafinesque, 1815

Subfamily: Ergalataxinae Kuroda, Habe & Oyama, 1971

Genus: *Lataxiena* Jousseaume, 1883

Species: *Lataxiena solenosteiroides* Houart, Fraussen & Barbier, 2013 (Fig. 1)

Material Examined: One empty shell (shell length 21.58 mm; shell width 11.94 mm; aperture length 6.06 mm; aperture width 3.82 mm).

Subfamily: Muricinae Rafinesque, 1815

Genus: *Murex* Linnaeus, 1758

Species: *Murex aduncospinosus* G. B. Sowerby II, 1841 (Fig. 3)

Material Examined: One empty shell (shell length 64.97 mm; shell width 25.53 mm; aperture length 12.81 mm; aperture width 8.41 mm).

Genus: *Chicoreus* *cnissodus* (Euthyme, 1889)

Species: *Chicoreus cnissodus ceylonensis* Houart, 2015 (Fig. 4)

Material Examined: One empty shell (shell length 49.59 mm; shell width 26.72 mm; aperture length 12.64 mm; aperture width 9.27 mm)

Subfamily: Rapaninae Gray, 1853

Genus: *Indothais* Claremont, Vermeij, Williams & Reid, 2013

Species: *Indothais javanica* (Philippi, 1848) (Fig. 2)

Material Examined: One empty shell (shell length 25.72 mm; shell width 16.41 mm; aperture length 8.72 mm; aperture width 5.21 mm)

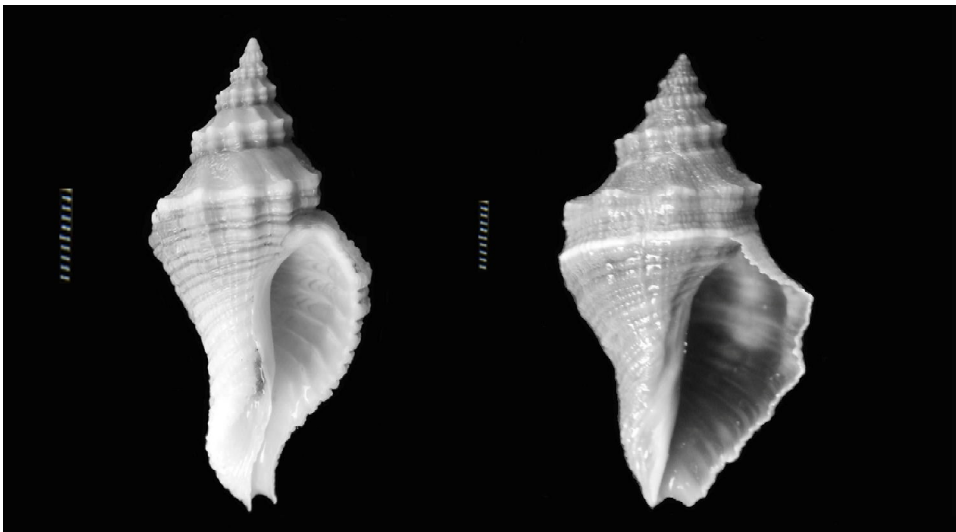


Fig. 1. *Lataxiena solenosteiroides*

Fig. 2. *Indothais javanica*

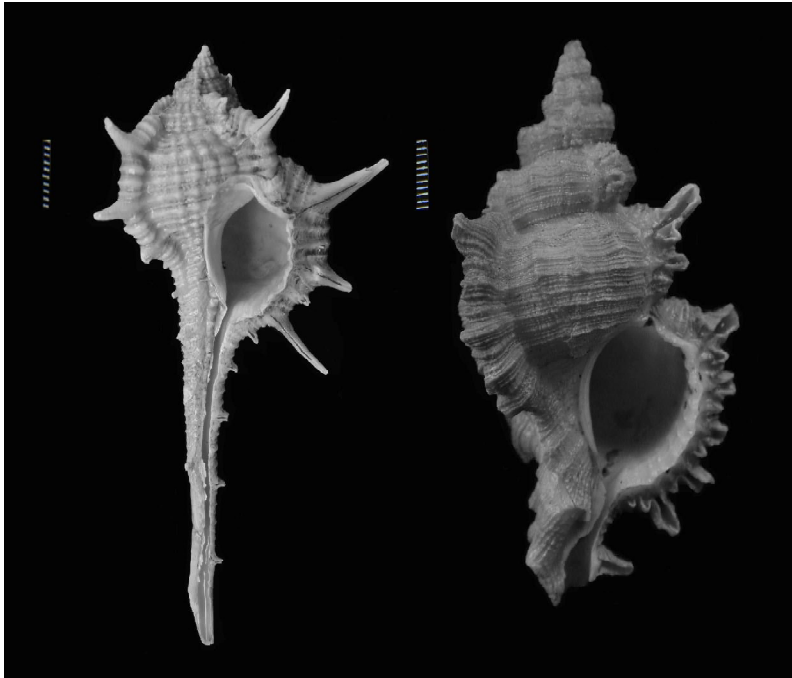


Fig. 3. *Murex aduncospinosus*

Fig. 4. *Chicoreus cnissodus ceylonensis*

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