

SHORT COMMUNICATION

A NOTE ON NUDIBRANCHS (MOLLUSCA: OPISTHOBRANCHIA) FROM PRÍNCIPE ISLAND (EASTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC).

PETER WIRTZ

WIRTZ, P. 2004. A note on nudibranchs (Mollusca Opisthobranchia) from Príncipe Island (eastern central Atlantic). *Arquipélago*. Life and Marine Sciences 21A: 81-82.

The nudibranchs *Hypselodoris picta verdensis*, *Platydoris rolani*, *Glossodoris edmundsi*, *Flabellina arvelei*, and *Flabellina llerae* were recorded during an expedition to Príncipe island, the last three species being new records for the area.

Peter Wirtz (email: peter.wirtz@clix.pt), Centro de Ciências do Mar, Universidade do Algarve, Campus de Gambelas, PT - 8000-117 Faro, Portugal.

INTRODUCTION

During an expedition to the island of Príncipe (Gulf of Guinea, eastern central Atlantic) in February and March 2004, marine invertebrates were photographed and collected in a depth range of 0-60 m. I here report on the nudibranchs encountered, including three species not yet recorded for the area.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Seven SCUBA night dives and 24 dives during daytime were conducted in the area of Bom Bom island (1°41'N 7°24'E). The species listed below were photographed in the field. Specimens of *Flabellina arvelei*, *Flabellina llerai* and *Glossodoris edmundsi* were collected and are now in the collection of Lucas Cervera, University of Cadiz. Photos of all five species encountered can now be seen on the "medslugs" website (www.medslugs.de).

RESULTS

Hypselodoris picta verdensis Ortea, Valdés and García-Gómez, 1996

Three different individuals of about 7 cm length were encountered during three different dives in the area of Bom Bom Island, during daytime, on vertical rock faces in a depth range of 1 - 10 m. *Hypselodoris picta* is a variable species living on both sides of the Atlantic, from the Azores to Angola in the eastern Atlantic and from Florida to Brazil in the western Atlantic; the subspecies *verdensis* is known from the Cape Verde Islands, São Tomé and southern Angola (ORTEA et al. 1996).

Platydoris rolani Dorgan, Valdés and Gosliner, 2002

The species has recently been described from São Tomé and Príncipe Islands (DORGAN et al. 2002). The holotype is from Príncipe. Two animals were encountered at Bom Bom island, during the day, below a stone, close together in 1m depth.

Glossodoris edmundsi Cervera, García-Gomez and Ortea, 1989

This species was common during daytime in large tide pools at Bom Bom Island. It is known from the Azores, Madeira, the Canary Islands and Ghana (ORTEA et al. 1996; WIRTZ 1998, 1999). The record from Príncipe provides a southward extension of the known range of the species.

Flabellina arvelei Ortea and Espinosa, 1998

Several individuals of this species were seen and photographed on rock faces in about 8 m depths near Mosteiros (1°41N, 7°28E) during daytime. This species has so far only been recorded from the Cape Verde Islands (ORTEA & ESPINOSA 1998). The record from Príncipe provides a southward extension of the known range of the species.

Flabellina llerai Ortea, 1989

Several individuals of this species were seen and photographed on a rock face exposed to heavy surge in 4 m depth at Pedra da Galé (1°43N, 7°23E). This species has so far only been recorded from the Cape Verde Islands (ORTEA & ESPINOSA 1998). The record from Príncipe provides a southward extension of the known range of the species.

DISCUSSION

The marine fauna of São Tomé and Príncipe contains a very large proportion of amphiatlantic species (WIRTZ 2003, 2004). Surprisingly, only one of the five nudibranch species reported here, *Hypselodoris picta*, is known from both sides of the Atlantic. The other four species have a strictly West-African distribution. The species *Flabellina arvelei* is, however, very similar to *Flabellina marcosorum* Gosliner and Kuzirian, 1990, known from Brazil and the two species may eventually turn out to be the same (A. Valdés, pers. com.). Because of low previous collecting efforts in the area, it comes perhaps as no surprise that species thought to be endemic to the Cape Verde Islands were now also found in the Gulf of Guinea. A close faunistic relationship between these areas was already suggested by the fact that they share the distinctly

coloured "verdensis" subspecies of *Hypselodoris picta*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to my travel- and diving-companion Karl Wittmann (who also carried a large part of the financial cost of this expedition) for all his help and his friendship. Many thanks also to Jannie and Cecilia Fourie, the managers of Bom Bom Resort, and their staff for their kindness and support. Ángel Valdés identified *Platydoris rolani*.

REFERENCES

- KELLY, M.D., Á. VALDÉS & T.M. GOSLINER 2002 Phylogenetic systematics of the genus *Platydoris* (Mollusca, Nudibranchia, Doridoidea) with descriptions of six new species. *Zoologica Scripta* 31/3: 271–319.
- ORTEA, J. & J. ESPINOSA 1998 Estudio de nueve especies del género *Flabellina* Voight, 1834 (Mollusca: Nudibranchia) colectadas en Angola, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Cuba y Portugal, con la descripción de tres especies nuevas. *Avicennia* 1998, 8/9, 135-148.
- ORTEA, J., A. VALDÉS, J.C. GARCÍA-GÓMEZ 1996 Revisión de las especies atlánticas de la familia Chromodoridae (Mollusca: Nudibranchia) del grupo cromático azul. *Avicennia* 1996, suplemento 1, 1-165.
- WIRTZ, P. 1998 Opisthobranch molluscs from the Azores. *Vita Marina* 45 (1-2): 1-16.
- WIRTZ, P. 1999 Opisthobranch molluscs from the archipelago of Madeira. *Vita Marina* 46 (1-2): 1-18.
- WIRTZ, P. 2003 New records of marine invertebrates from São Tomé Island. *Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the UK* 83: 735-736.
- WIRTZ, P. 2004. Four amphiatlantic shrimps new for São Tomé and Príncipe (eastern central Atlantic). *Arquipélago. Life and Marine Sciences* 21A: 75-77.

Accepted, 18 October 2004..