

ON THE RANGE EXTENSION OF THE CARIDEAN SHRIMP *CONCHODYTES TRIDACNAE* PETERS IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE BIVALVE *TRIDACNA TRIDACNA* LINNEAUS IN THE MINICOY ATOLL, LAKSHADWEEP¹

While surveying the Lakshadweep group of Islands, one of the authors (A. M.) came across a caridean shrimp *Conchodytes tridacnae* Peters (Plate VIII, Figs. 1 & 2) ensconced within the mantle cavity of a giant bivalve *Tridacna tridacna* Linn. (Plate VIII, Fig. 3) from the coral bed of Minicoy atoll (Between Lat. 8°15' N and 8°20' N and Long. 73°0'E and 73°05'E), the southern most atoll in Lakshadweep, Arabian Sea.

Material : One example (♂), Minicoy atoll, 14.7mm in length, B. P. Halder & A. Misra, 11.12.1979, Reg. No. C 2533/2.

The present note reports the southward extension of the range of distribution of the shrimp within the Lakshadweep group of islands. From the published reports, it reveals that the species is widely distributed in the Indo-Pacific region and is confined to the insular regions *viz.*, Andamans and Lakshadweep group of islands in India.

The earliest report of the occurrence of this shrimp (as *Pontonia* sp.) within the mantle cavity of clam (*Tridaona* sp.) from the Indian waters, Cherbanian reef, the northern most open reef in Lakshadweep, is by Alcock (1902). Pearson (1905) erected the new genus *Conchodytes* for *Pontonia*. Kemp (1922) determined the shrimp of Cherbanian reef collected by Investigator, Octo. 1891 as *Conchodytes*

tridacnae Peters and mentioned the extension of the range of distribution of this species to Port-Blair, Andamans, Indian Ocean. The first report of the association of this species with a holothurian host, off Cinque Island, South Andamans, is by Chopra (1937). The study of Nagabhusanam & Rao (1972) on the marine fauna of Minicoy atoll, Lakshadweep, reports the occurrence of the bivalve but not the shrimp.

The exact relationship of the shrimp with the host is not studied in detail. But from the observations, so far, made, it appears that the host provides not only a safe shelter but also sufficient food and oxygen through its activity. In turn, the benefit gained by the host through this association is apparently nil.

Concluding, it may be stated that future collections and observations from the mainland as well as the islands in the Indian region, should focus sufficient light on the nature of relationship existing between the associating partners.

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