

MARINE BIOLOGICAL RECORDERS REPORT 1986

Roger Herbert

Efforts this year have been primarily concerned with collating and collecting previous records from the Island's shores and updating marine biological nomenclature in Morey (1909). Contact has been made with research workers in centres of higher education who study the area and in some cases have obtained material from our shores for many years. Fieldwork this year has resulted in the following noteworthy records.

Coelenterata

Sagartia troglodytes (Price) (sea anemone)

Previously recorded at St. Helens (Morey 1909) though discovered this year in the Medina estuary adjacent to Medina Valley Centre attached to stones and weeds at MTL, and also at Newtown together with *Cereus pedunculatus* (Pennant). A colour transparency of a specimen was sent to Dick Manuel at Oxford University who confirmed without doubt the identity, though stated it as being an unusual form. This species was not listed by Withers (1979a) in his study of the macrofauna of the Medina estuary.

Velella velella (L.) (siphonophore)

Whilst walking along the south-west coast near Grange Chine during October, Mr. and Mrs. F. Sykes discovered two stranded specimens of the siphonophore *Velella velella* (L.) and another specimen was found at Chilton Chine. This is an oval disc-shaped free-floating hydrozoan with an upright "sail" giving it the common name By-the-wind-sailor. It is occasionally washed up on British shores after storms, though this is a new record for the Isle of Wight.

Mollusca

Elysia viridis (Montagu) (opisthobranch mollusc)

Found to be abundant at Bembridge on the green alga *Codium fragile* just south of Lifeboat Station. This dark green slug-like animal, which may reach 4cm when extended, stores the chloroplasts of *Codium* which continue to photosynthesize and provide the animal with carbohydrates and oxygen. This species was recorded by Morey (1909) at Horseledge.

Crustacea

The crabs *Pisa tetraodon* (Pennant) and *Macropodia rostrata* (L.) were abundant between MNTL and MLWS at Bembridge during September and October. *Pisa tetraodon* was recorded in the IOW marine fauna list (Anon., 1954) and *Macropodia rostrata* has been recorded at Bembridge by Withers (unpub.1979).

Echinodermata

Amphipholis squamata (Delle Chiaje) (brittle starfish)

This tiny echinoderm, reaching little more than 2.5cm across, has been found this year in high densities under rocks at Bembridge ledges between MLWN and MLWS, under boulders at Castle Haven and at Newtown, where it was found under stones within a fast-flowing channel under the footbridge. The species was confirmed by Prof. David Nichols of Exeter University who expressed interest in the record considering the relatively few echinoderms to be found in the area. Previously published records are St. Helens (as *Amphiura elegans* (Doubleday (1900)), IOW Marine fauna list (Anon., 1954) and at Ryde (Withers 1979b).

A sea urchin found by a diver in the Solent during the summer and originally thought to be the edible urchin *Echinus esculentus* (L.) was later identified as *Psammechinus miliaris* (Gmelin), common in the western Solent.

Fish

Other marine records include the capture of a Tadpole fish *Raniceps raninus* (L.) by a holidaymaker off the Needles. This is a new record for the Island's coastal waters of a fish which although found all round the British Isles is more common in northern Scandinavian waters. It is thought to be under-recorded rather than rare.

References

- Anon. 1954. *Isle of Wight Marine Fauna List 1947-1954*. Colwyn Bay.
- Doubleday, H.A. 1900. *The Victorian history of the Counties of England; Hampshire and Isle of Wight*. Westminster.
- Marine Biological Association. 1957. *Plymouth Marine Fauna* (3rd edn.) Plymouth.
- Morey, F. (ed.) 1909. *A Guide to the Natural History of the Isle of Wight*. Newport.
- Withers, R.G. 1979. Unpublished record cards, Portsmouth Polytechnic Marine laboratory, Hayling Island.
- Withers, R.G. 1979a. The Marine macrofauna and flora of the Medina Estuary, *Proc. Isle Wight nat. Hist. archaeol. Soc.*, 7(1) (for 1976): 19-30.
- Withers, R.G. 1979b. Observations on the macrofauna of intertidal sands at Ryde and Bembridge, Isle of Wight, *Proc. Isle Wight nat. Hist. archaeol. Soc.* 7(2) (for 1977): 81-89.