

On the occurrence of Paper bubble shell, *Hydatina zonata* (Lightfoot, 1786) from Maharashtra waters

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Paper bubble shell, *Hydatina zonata* (Fig. 1) was observed in trawl catch at a depth of 19-20 m

off Maharashtra along with several other fish species in the month of May 2013. *H. zonata* is a rare form



Fig. 1. *Hydatina zonata*

of sea slug and known to be endemic to the Indo-Pacific region. The species was earlier reported from Chennai, Pamban, Kundukkal Point and Mandapam (Satyamurti, 1952; Sundaram, 1969) along the south-east coast and once from Gujarat (Menon *et al.*, 1961). Ganesh *et al.* (2009) reported the species from the north-east coast of India and Sethi (2013) reported from Chennai waters. A literature review on the distribution of this species revealed that this is the first report of *H. zonata* from Maharashtra waters. *H. zonata* generally occurs at depth

between 50-70 m in fine sand. The species was reported earlier as *H. velum* (Gmelin, 1791) which is its synonym.

Hydatina is characterized by many thin brown spiral lines coloring the shell. There are a number of names which apply to *Hydatina* shells in which brown axial lines predominate. Usually the brown lines are split into a series of spiral zones by white spiral bands. In one form, *H. cinctoria*, the brown zones are separated by five white bands, while in *H. velum* there is an upper, a lower, and a thin median white band, each of which is outlined with a thin dark brown line.

The *H. zonata* shell of is ovoid, fragile and thin. It is light straw coloured with dark brown broad spiral enclosing white, one near its sunken spire, another in the middle of the body whorl and third one at its lower part. Suture is deep and aperture is broad, thin, sharp and surface is smooth.

H. zonata were observed from four stations off Maharashtra during the period 28-05-13 to 31-05-13. The trawling operations lasted for three hours each and the mesh size was 35 mm. The shell length ranged from 30 - 40 mm and the weight ranged from 40.3 to 60.5 g. The specimens of *H. zonata* have been deposited in the Reference Collection of Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Mumbai.