Scale worm recorded from Lakshadweep

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During an underwater survey in lagoon of Chetlat island Lakshdweep in 2015 a cryptic, commensalistic scale worm association on the sea cucumber Stichopus chloronotus was observed. This scale worm was identified as Gastrolepidia clavigera Schmarda, 1861 which come under polychaetes (Family:Polynoidae). These are known to inhabit the surface of holothurians in its anterior or posterior ends, and if disturbed crawl into the mouth or cloaca of the sea cucumber. The colour of the scale worm mimics the colour of the host which makes it difficult to be detected. Studies have found that this scale worm species feed on the tissue of the sea cucumber and are resistant to the toxin holothurin which is commonly released by sea cucumbers against predators. Fauvel (1941), Tampi and Rangarajan (1964), Tikader et al. (1986) and Marudhupandi et al. 2012 have reported earlier on this association of sea cucumber and scale worm from Andaman islands, Rameswaram and Agatti islands. The present report records the enhanced distributional range of this species in the Lakshadweep coral reef ecosystem.

First report of Spotted reef crab off Vizhinjam coast

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Carpilius maculatus (Linnaeus, 1758), commonly known as ‘Seven-eleven crab’, ‘Spotted reef crab’, ‘Dark finger coral crab’, or ‘Large spotted crab’ is a member of the family Carpiliidae. One male specimen of the spotted reef crab C. maculatus measuring 130 mm in carapace width was caught by a bottom set gill net along with Portunus sanguinolentus from the rocky area in Vizhinjam coastal waters.

This species is reported as an active, nocturnal scavenger and known to be distributed in the Indo-west Pacific region, east coast of Africa, Hawaiian