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
Sea erosion along the Andhra Pradesh coast

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Andhra Pradesh with a coastline of around 974 km has frequently been affected by cyclones and inundated by storm surges. Sea erosion is noticed at Visakhapatnam, Bhimunipatnam and in the East and West Godavari districts. Vishakhapatnam coast is facing erosion since long specially at Ramakrishna Beach. In 2013 and 2014, the cyclones ‘Phailin’ and ‘Hudhud’ further hastened erosion of the Ramakrishna Beach, severely damaging the adjacent protection wall and road. Uppada village which is 22 kilometres away from Kakinada also faces severe erosion. The Kakinada-Uppada road is gradually disappearing due to shoreline erosion. In the event of submersion of the road in sea water, the residents of 20 seashore villages will have to face many difficulties to reach Kakinada. Many buildings, temples and coconut groves in the village also face the threat of incursion by the sea. Peddamylavani Lanka of West Godavari district is another fishing village which is affected by sea erosion. Many coconut trees have got uprooted and roads damaged with the sea extending more inland. Environmentalists attribute beach erosion which has been severe in the recent times to urbanization, anthropogenic activities, construction of jetties and lack of mangrove plantation along the beaches. An annual feature since the construction of the Outer Harbour in 1970s, the Visakhapatnam Port Trust takes up the responsibility of beach nourishment by removing sediments collected in the Sand Trap built near the Dolphin’s Nose and breakwater area. Dredging is being carried out for restoration of beach and for sand deposition at shore.

Islands and Red sea. These crabs are not very common on the Indian coast except in certain areas such as Gulf of Mannar, Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands. This is the first report of this species from Vizhinjam coast. The species is known to inhabit rocky beaches or coral reefs to a maximum depth of 30 m and mostly found in 3 to 6 m depth in coral reefs.

**Classification**
- **Phylum**: Arthropoda
- **Subphylum**: Crustacea
- **Class**: Malacostraca
- **Order**: Decapoda
- Infraorder: Brachyura
- Family: Carupilidae
- Genus: Carupilus
- Species: Carupilus maculatus

This crab is characterized by a beautiful creamy ground color with symmetrically disposed 11 large red spots; four in a row along posterior border, three across middle area and two behind each orbit on carapace. The carapace is smooth, convex and front with a lobate process divided into two lobules by a depression in the median. Anterolateral border entire, chelipeds very stout, unequal and smooth. It has four blunt spines between the eyes.

Coconut trees damaged by sea erosion at Peddamylavani Lanka

Coconut trees damaged by sea erosion at Peddamylavani Lanka

Coconut trees damaged by sea erosion at Peddamylavani Lanka

Sea erosion at Ramakrishna Beach