

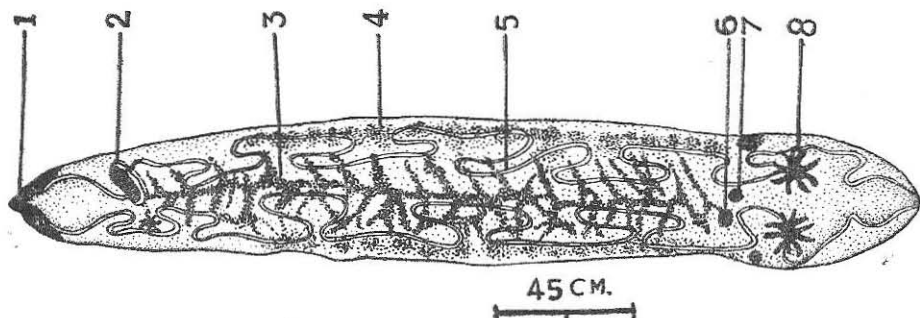
30. OCCURRENCE OF THE DIGENITIC TREMATODE
ASTRORCHIS RENICAPITE (LEIDY) (FAMILY : PRONOCE-
PHALIDEA) IN THE LEATHERY TURTLE *DERMOCHELYS*
CORIACEA (LINNÉ) FROM THE INDIAN OCEAN

(With a text-figure)

In April 1962, a large male leathery turtle *Dermochelys coriacea* (Linné) which had got entangled in the gill nets was discarded by the fishermen near the Pamban landing centre on the Gulf of Mannar side of Rameswaram Island at about 11.00 a.m. The specimen measured 152.5 centimetres from snout to tail.

The turtle was dissected and thirty-one specimens of the intestinal parasite *Astrorchis renicapite* (Leidy 1856) (Fig.) were noticed in the stomach. They were seen among the green algae *Enteromorpha compressa*

and fish scales which constituted the bulk of the stomach content of the turtle.



(1) Anterior sucker, (2) Cirrus pouch, (3) Uterine coils, (4) Vitellaria, (5) Caeca, (6) Ootype, (7) Ovary, (8) Testis.

Description: Body slender; head collar not divided. Oral sucker narrow and small. Oesophagus short, caeca narrow waviness terminating at posterior end. Testes branched; cirrus pouch short, oblique, covering part of seminal vesicles. Genital pore near left margin of body just behind the intestinal bifurcation. Ovary anterior to testis; vitellaria consisting of small follicles extends antero-laterally. Uterine coils extend medially up to cirrus pouch. Eggs numerous.

Some specimens had blood in the caecum indicating their blood-sucking habit.

According to Deraniyagala (1939, P. 44, TETRAPOD REPTILES OF CEYLON) *Astorchis renicapite* is the only intestinal parasite so far known from *Dermochelys coriacea*. The fact that the same species of parasite infests the leathery turtle of Mediterranean, Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions may be of interest in view of the divergent opinions (Deraniyagala op. cit.) on the identity of the leathery turtle of different regions.

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