

Occurrence of hammer oyster, *Malleus albus* near Nachikuppam, Chennai

S. N. Sethi and P. Poovannan

Madras Research Centre of CMFRI, Chennai

The hammer oyster, *Malleus albus* is placed under Class Bivalvia, Subclass Pteriomorpha, Order Pterioida, Superfamily Pteriacea, Family Malleidae. The oyster is locally called *suti ali*. These oysters (Fig. 1 a and b) were caught by fishermen from Nachikuppam, 1-2 km off Chennai using *Nakkuvalai*, a bottom set gillnet, at a depth of 5-7 fathoms. The maximum and minimum shell length was 156 mm and 77 mm and the average length and weight were 117 mm and 29 g respectively. The two-part shell is

thick and T-shaped. Inner surface of the shell has a large muscular scar and periostracum white in colour. The hinge is on the 'horizontal' portion of the 'T' and the valves held shut by one large adductor muscle at the cross of the 'T'. Ligament with prominent hinge teeth. The inner shell is partially lined with mother-of-pearl. Byssus threads are produced near the hinge. Most live in the crevices of coral rocks or on reef flats, in tropical regions. Dead shells are mostly used for making crude lime.

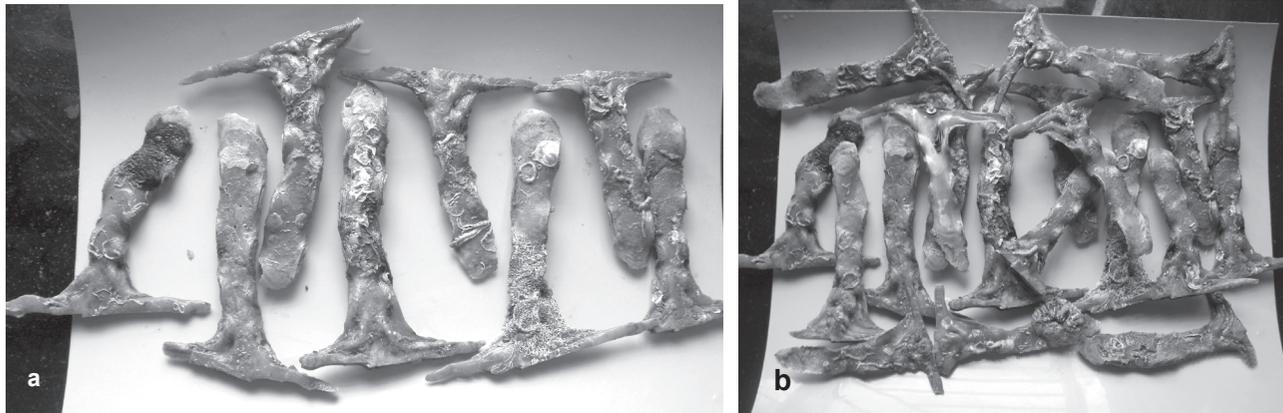


Fig. 1 a and b. Hammer oyster, *Malleus albus* collected from Nachikuppam, Chennai