

First record of the sclerectinian coral *Echinopora lamellosa* from Minicoy, Lakshadweep

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The sclerectinian coral *Echinopora lamellosa* (Esper, 1795) has been recorded from the Minicoy lagoon (8° 18'10.7"N; 73°00'58.3"E) during an underwater survey on 3rd December 2015. This is a new record for the coral fauna of Minicoy island,

Lakshadweep. The genera *Echinopora* and *Montipora* were considered to be absent from the coral fauna of Minicoy by earlier workers (Venkataraman and Ch. Stayanarayana, 2012 *Coral Identification Manual*. Zoological Survey of India,

Kolkata, India. p. 7), giving it a distinct composition when compared to that of the northern islands of the Lakshadweep archipelago, from which it lies separated by the Nine Degree Channel. However, *Montipora* was reported in an earlier study from Minicoy (Pillai and Jasmine, 1989, *CMFRI Bulletin No. 43*: 184). The current record of *Echinopora lamellosa* establishes that the coral faunal composition of Minicoy is similar to that of other Lakshadweep islands. *E. lamellosa* has a wide distribution in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

The genus *Echinopora* is placed under the family Merulinidae and has 17 species of which four species, namely, *E. gemmacea*, *E. horrida*, *E. hirsutissima* and *E. lamellosa* are recorded from India. *Echinopora lamellosa* is characterized by laminar colonies bearing circular, cylindrical or markedly conical plocoid corallites, 2.5 to 4 mm in

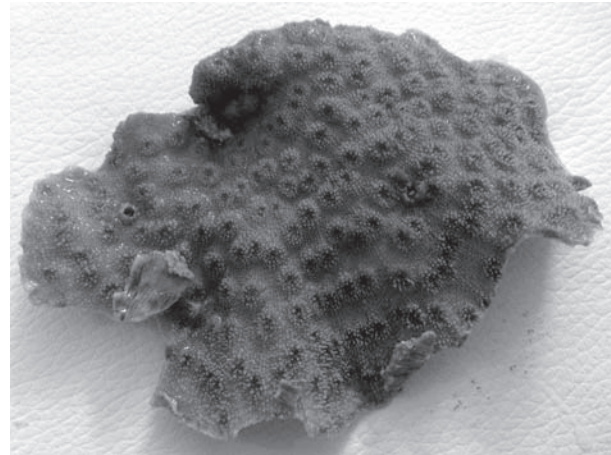


Fig. 1. *Echinopora lamellosa* colony showing corallites

diameter. Septa are exsert and irregular. A ring of palliform lobes is present. Uniform, closely packed spines on and between corallites gives it a characteristic “furry” appearance (Fig.1).