

A NEW DISTRIBUTIONAL RECORD FOR THE SEA CUCUMBER
HOLOTHURIA (SEMPEROTHURIA) CINERASCENS (BRANDT)
FROM GOA COAST

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ABSTRACT

Occurrence of sea cucumber, *Holothuria (Semperothuria) cinerascens* (Brandt), from intertidal region of Anjuna (Goa) along central west coast of India is reported. Notes on morphological characteristics are given.

Key-words: Sea cucumber, *Holothuria cinerascens*, Goa coast

The sea cucumbers (Echinodermata: Holothuridea) are one of the important members of intertidal biota, and as elsewhere are represented by the commonly occurring species *Holothuria leucospilota* (Brandt) along Goa coast (Lat. 14° 54' — 15° 48'N and Long. 73° 41' — 74° 20'E). During a faunistic survey some reddish brown species (slightly paler on ventral surface) of sea cucumbers were collected from Anjuna beach, Goa, in February and May 1986. Unlike *H. leucospilota* which commonly occurs in sandy bottom or in gravely rock pools, this species seemed to prefer rocky substratum and were found anchored firmly in between the furrows of rocks. On detailed examination, these were identified to be *H. cinerascens* (Brandt). James (1969 & 1973) has reported the occurrence of *H. cinerascens* from Kovalam and Vizhingam along southwest coast; Mandapam along southeast coast; Minicoy (Lakshadweep Sea) and Rangat Bay (Andaman Sea) and Mary Bai and Ramanathan (1977) from the coasts of Kanyakumari. But it was not reported from Goa coast so far. Hence this note forms the first record from this region.

The specimens were about 15 cm in length with a slender and more or less cylindrical body (Fig. 1 A). The dorsal surface possessed scattered papillae and indistinct black blotches while the ventral surface was crowded with closely arranged pedicels, more or less in three rows. Calcareous ring quite well developed with five radial and five interradial plates, former being longer than latter. Tentacles peltate and twenty in number. Two polian vesicles and a respiratory tree, also present.

Microscopic examination of spicules from body-wall revealed the presence of spinose rods and tables (Fig. 1 B), agreeing closely with published description and illustrations of Clark and Rowe (1971). Rosettes absent. Rods-spinose with rough margin, varying in length from 0.123 to 0.138 mm. Tables

(Average height .062 mm) with reduced disc and relatively high spire, terminates into few spines, forming maltese cross when viewed from above.

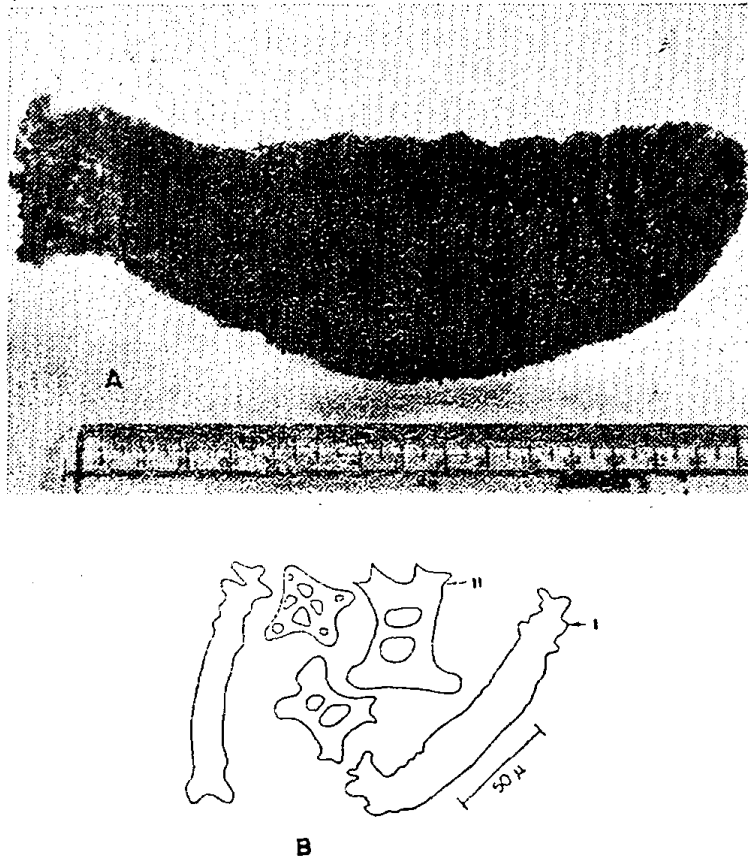


Fig. 1. A. Dorsal view of *H. cinerascens* (Brandt) B. Spicules from body wall comprising (i) rods and (ii) tables.

H. cinerascens is reported to occur abundantly at Kovalam and Vizhin-gam, along Kerala coast (James, 1973). But along Goa coast its occurrence is only occasional and in low population density. Although this area is surveyed regularly; so far only two specimens, once in February and then in May 1986, could be observed.

The presence of *H. cinerascens* along this coast has extended its distribution limit, northwards upto Goa, along central west coast of India.

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