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***Rhynchothorax mediterraneus*, the First Record of
Rhynchothoracidae (Pycnogonida) from Japan**

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With Text-figures 1-2

Abstract Several specimens of a pycnogonid, *Rhynchothorax mediterraneus* Costa, 1861 were found in collections from Tanabe Bay. This is the first record of the family Rhynchothoracidae from Japanese waters and considerably extends the species' distribution.

Introduction

The Japanese pycnogonid fauna is extremely rich with over 155 species covering most of the families (Nakamura and Child, 1991). The only exception is the family Rhynchothoracidae although some authors believe the presence of it in Japanese waters (Krapp, 1973; Nakamura and Child, 1991).

We report the first Japanese member of this family, *Rhynchothorax mediterraneus* from Tanabe Bay, on the Pacific coast of southwestern Japan.

***Rhynchothorax mediterraneus* Costa, 1861**

(Figure 1)

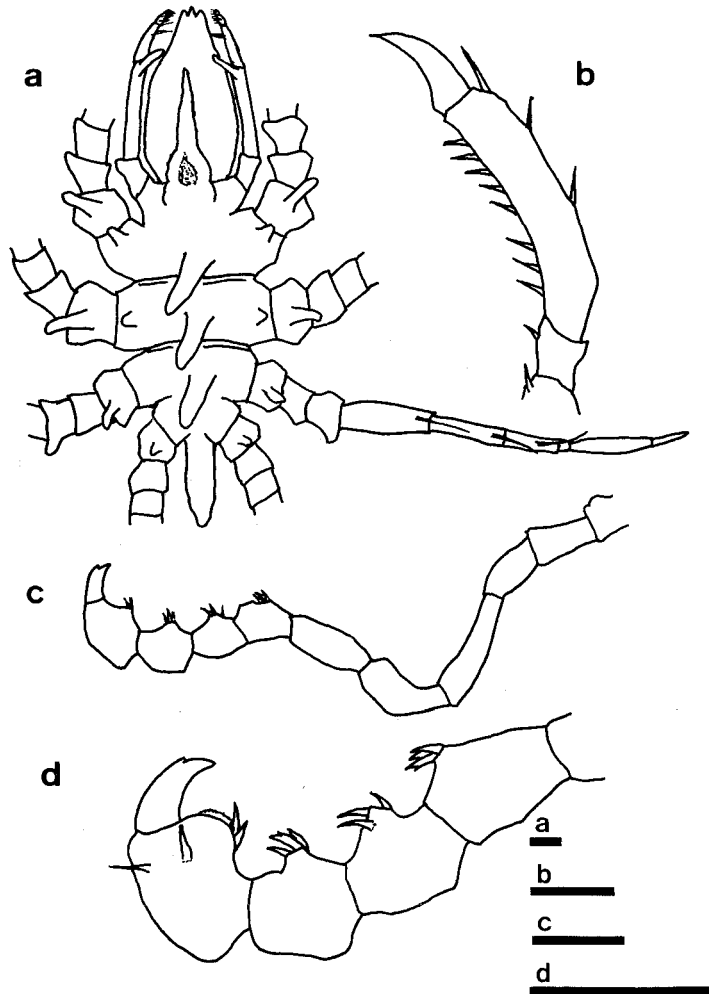
Child 1988: 56 (references); Stock 1988: 507; Arnaud & Krapp 1990: 4-5(key); Stock 1992: 135-136; Stock 1994: 41.

Materials

1 female, off Minabe, Tanabe Bay, depth unknown, on calcareous algae, 30 March 1994; 2 males, 3 females, off Minabe, Tanabe Bay, depth unknown, on stony and soft corals, 25 April 1994.

All materials were found among the private collection of Mr. Atsushi Mori, Seto Marine Biological Laboratory, taken from wastes of hauls of spiny lobster fishing off Minabe.

Remarks



Figs. 1. *Rhynchothorax mediterraneus* Male. a. trunk and third right leg, dorsal view; b. terminal segments of first leg; c. right oviger; d. terminal segments of left oviger. Bars=100 μ m.

At first *Rhynchothorax mediterraneus* was described from the Mediterranean Sea, but is now known to have a much wider distribution (Fig. 2). The present record extends its distribution to the Northwest Pacific Ocean (Fig. 2), and substantiates Krapp's (1973) prediction, "They (= *Rhynchothorax* species) probably exist (in the Japanese waters), as there is an early Tethys connection involved...". Indeed, there are some pycnogonid species in common between the Japanese and the Mediterranean Seas (Arnaud and Bamber, 1987).

The bathymetrical records of the present specimens are unknown, but they apparently fall within the usual range of this species (0–200m; one record from 1100m (Stock, 1992)).

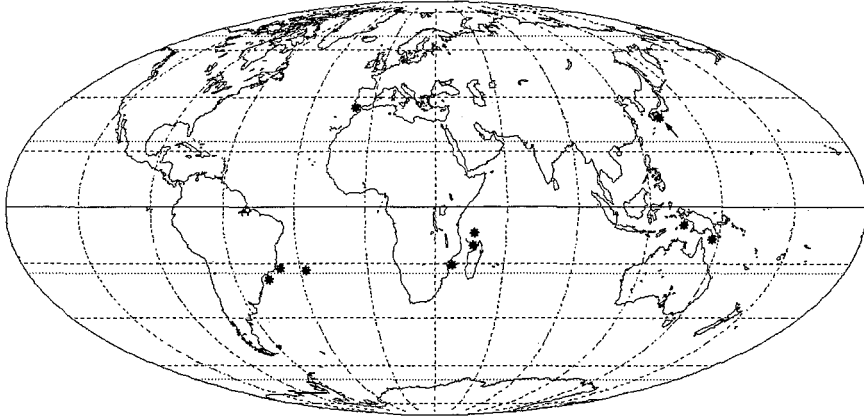


Fig. 2. Records of *Rhynchothorax mediterraneus* (*) outside the Mediterranean Sea. Arrow indicates the present record.

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