# A NEW RECORD OF A MOERISIID HYDROID FROM SOUTH AFRICA

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The recent discovery of the brackish-water hydroid, *Ostroumovia inkermanica* (Paltschikowa-Ostroumowa 1925) in southern Africa is worth recording, since to date this species is known only from the Black Sea and India. In fact the only records of the family Moerisiidae known from Africa at all are *Moerisia lyonsi* from the Qurun Lake of Egypt (Boulenger 1908) and the little-known *Moerisia alberti* from the Congo (Leloup 1938).

Specimens of both hydranths and medusae were sent to the author by the Zoology Department, Rhodes University, Grahamstown. They were found in Nhlanga Lake, part of the Kosi Bay system in northern Zululand, position approximately 27°00'S/32° 40'E. The salinity of the lake is fairly constant, varying between three and four parts per thousand.

The hydranths (Fig. 1) were obtained by grab-sampling on a sandy substratum in depths varying from two to thirteen metres, and by netting in *Potamogeton* beds. Totalling 24 individuals in all, they vary in height from 0·6 to 3·4 mm (preserved) and carry a crown of four to twelve moniliform tentacles, which are arranged in one or two rough whorls. The base is firmly attached to a sand-grain by a perisarc-covered pedal disc, or, in most cases, branches to form a stoloniferous hydrorhiza attached by a number of pedal discs. Such stolons are known to be a method of asexual reproduction (Valkanov 1938), and in one case a second small hydranth arises from the same hydrorhiza as an older one. The stolons, and sometimes the base of the hydranth as well, are covered by a gelatinous extension of the perisarc to which silt readily adheres. A second method of asexual reproduction is represented by one to three lateral buds immediately below the tentacular crown in certain individuals. Medusa buds occur in one hydranth only, arising between the tentacle bases. These, though young, show the typical quadrate shape.

The medusae were present in three plankton samples. Stages with four, eight and sixteen marginal tentacles occur, the largest medusa measuring 1·7 mm in diameter and 1·7 mm in depth (preserved). Although none are fully mature, gonads are present on the stomach wall in larger specimens and have begun to spread outwards along the radial lobes of the stomach as is typical of the species.

Nematocysts of three types occur. Stenoteles (9·0 x 6·3 – 13·1 x 10·8 $\mu$) and desmonemes (5·9 x 2·7 – 8·1 x 4·1 $\mu$) are abundant on both hydranth and medusa. A third type (8·1 x 2·7 – 9·9 x 2·7 $\mu$), with an elongated banana-shaped capsule, occurs on the hypostome of the hydranth only. The last were found only in the undischarged state and could not be identified with certainty.

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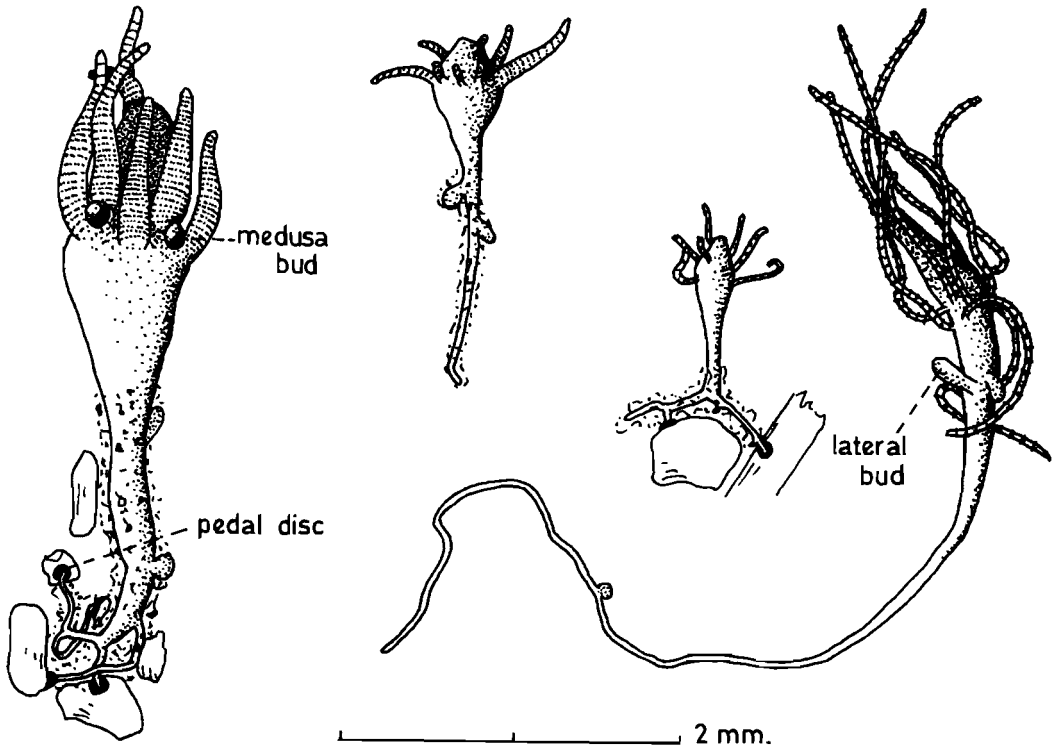


FIGURE 1
*Ostroumovia inkermanica*, hydroid stage.

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