

First Record of the Apodid Sea Cucumber *Anapta gracilis* Semper, 1868 (Holothuroidea: Synaptidae) in the Gulf of Thailand

Arom Mucharin^{*1} Yves Samyn² Bang-on Changlom¹ and Wanchai Sukkasem¹

¹ Natural History Museum, National Science Museum, Thailand,
Technopolis, Khlong 5, Khlong Luang, Pathum Thani 12120 Thailand

² Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Vautierstraat 29 B-1000 Brussels, Belgium

ABSTRACT: The first record of the apodid sea cucumber *Anapta gracilis* in the Gulf of Thailand is herein recorded. A redescription of *Anapta gracilis* is given and its taxonomic status is clarified. In the absence of a lectotype, we herein assign a lectotype.

KEY WORDS: *Anapta gracilis*, Gulf of Thailand, taxonomy, lectotype.

INTRODUCTION

Putchakarn and Sonchaeng (2004) have recently given a comprehensive account of the echinodermata of Thailand, listing 94 holothuroids belonging to four orders and eight families. A recent survey in the mangrove forests of Chanthaburi Province in Eastern Thailand (figure 1) revealed an apodid that has not previously been recorded from the Gulf of Thailand: *Apodida gracilis* Semper, 1868.

The present paper provides a full redescription of this species gives an overview of its known distribution and clarifies its taxonomic status by lectotypification.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Specimens were collected by A. Mucharin and B. Changlom on 13 May 2008 by hand-picking in the mud of the Ban Ngong Chim, Bang Chan subdistrict, Leam Sing district, Chanthaburi Province. In total 19 specimens were collected. These were anaesthetized in 10% magnesium sulphate for 12 hours, transferred to 95% buffered alcohol for two days and then transferred to 70% buffered alcohol for permanent storage. Ossicles were removed in household bleach, washed in three changes of distilled water, photographed with a digital camera, and drawn using a camera lucida.

*Corresponding author.

E-mail: arom@nsm.or.th



Figure 1. The mangrove forest mud of Chanthaburi Province in Eastern Thailand is home to *Anapta gracilis* Semper, 1868.



Figure 2. *Anapta gracilis* Semper, 1868. A. Living specimens. B. Anterior view: the mouth is surrounded by 12 pinnate tentacles.

SYSTEMATIC ACCOUNT

Apodida Brandt, 1835

Synaptidae Burmeister, 1837

Synaptinae Östergren, 1898

***Anapta* Semper, 1868**

***Anapta gracilis* Semper, 1868**

Anapta gracilis Semper, 1868: 17, pl. 3 fig.1, pl. 4 figs 10-15; Lampert, 1885: 229, H.L. Clark 1908: 110, pl. 2, fig. 1, pl. 7 figs. 19-23; Sluiter, C.P., 1914; H.L. Clark, 1924: 501, pl 12, figs.8; Heding, 1931: 663, fig. 8, pl. 11, fig. 1; Sane & Chhapgar: 1962: 673, 674, pl1, fig f; Clark & Rowe 1971: 184; Liao & Clark, 1995: 525, fig. 321; Liao 1997: 253, fig. 150.

Type locality: Manila, Philippines.

Type data: lectotype ZMMSU H-134.

Material Examined: THNHM-Ec-05196 (17 specimens)

Description: The specimens are 98-213 mm long and 10-16 mm in

diameter. The complete body is purplish-brown with numerous white spots and 5 brownish longitudinal lines. There is a terminal mouth and anus with surrounding tentacles that are a uniform brown (figure 2A). The skin is thin, translucent, and not sticky to the touch. There are 12 tentacles with 11 digits (figure 2B).

The calcareous ring is normal and very small, 0.78 mm high by 4 mm in diameter. There are several polian vesicles (4-7) and a single stone-canal.

Vestigial ossicles are scattered everywhere in the skin. The plates are very small, 30-38 μ long (figure 3) and 6-12 μ thick, with granuliform surfaces.

Ecology: the species is nocturnal, being fully exposed on mud during low tide at night in mangrove forests. During the day and at high tide they remain hidden in the mud.

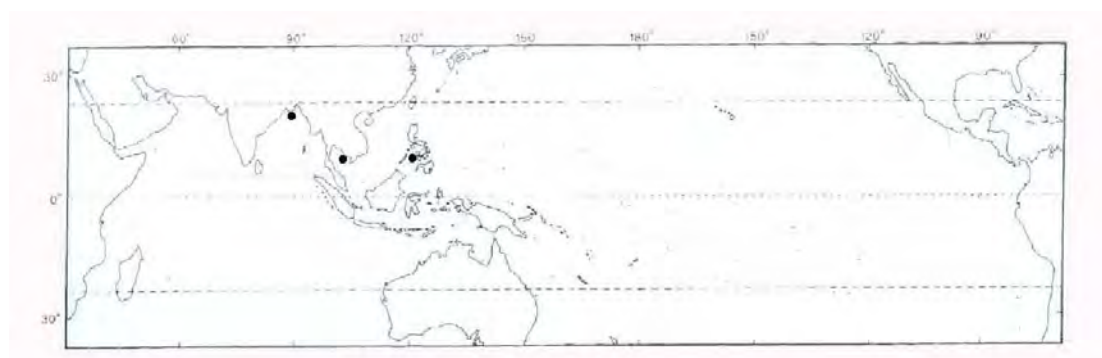


Figure 3. The known distribution of *Anapta gracilis* Semper, 1868. Geographic distribution: Bay of Bengal (Mombai), East Indies (Thailand) and the Philippine Islands (Manila = type locality).

DISCUSSION

This new addition to the fauna of Thailand shows conclusively that the holothuroid fauna of Thailand remain poorly studied, especially in habitats such as mangrove forests, which are not always easily accessible for sampling.

The original description of *A. gracilis* Semper, 1868 does not indicate the number of type specimens. Heding, in 1931, wrote that he found one specimen in the collection of the Zoological Museum of Hamburg (ZMH E. 2978) that originated from the type locality. He thought that this specimen might belong to the type series. In 1981, Rowe (pers. comm.) visited the ZMH and found specimen ZMH E. 2978, which he treated as the

holotype: however, in 2008, Massin, Samyn and Van den Spiegel (unpublished) re-visited the ZMH collection and did not find specimen ZMH E. 2978 even though it is indicated in the original ZMH catalogue. On the other hand, a search through the collection of the Zoological Museum of Moscow State University turned up one specimen of *A. gracilis* from Manila (ZMMSU H-134) that was labelled 'type'. There are thus at least two specimens in the type series. (see also Heding 1931: 663). The designation by monotypy as mentioned in Liao (1997) can thus not be upheld.

Given that specimen ZMH E. 2798 can at present not be located we have decided to designate specimen ZMMSU H-134 as the lectotype.

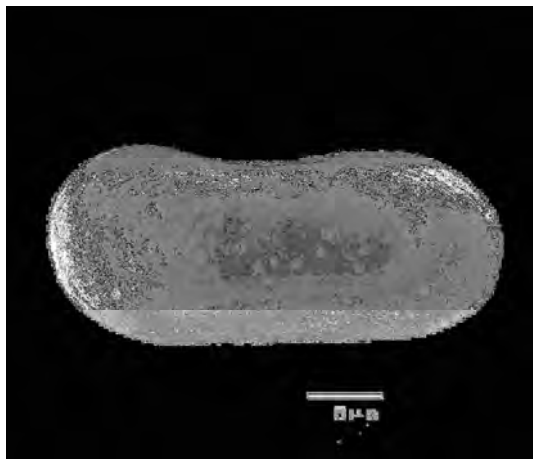


Figure 4. *Anapta gracilis* Semper, 1868: irregularly shaped ossicles from the body wall.

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