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Two new jellyfishes (Cnidaria: Scyphozoa) from tropical Australian waters

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Abstract

Two new species of scyphozoan jellyfishes from tropical Australian waters are described. The first, *Sanderia pampinosus*, **n. sp.**, from waters off northern Western Australia, represents the first record of the genus from Australia. It differs from its only other congener, *S. malayensis* Goette, 1886, in having: (1) almost double the number of gonadal papillae at about half the body size; (2) horseshoe-shaped gonadal rings; and (3) eradial tentacles that are flattened in the oral-aboral direction and have nematocyst clusters on all sides. The second species, *Netrostoma nuda*, **n. sp.**, from the Great Barrier Reef region, has been erroneously identified in the past as *N. coerulescens*. Species distinctions in the genus rely on the number and relative position of warts or papillae on the central dome; in contrast, *N. nuda* lacks warts and papillae, and instead has a large gelatinous knob at the apex of the bell. A key to the species of *Netrostoma* is provided, along with a synoptic list of previous reports of scyphozoans in tropical Australian waters.

Key words: tropical Australia, Western Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland, Scyphozoa, Pelagiidae, Cepheidae, new species

Introduction

The pelagic coelenterates of Australia are poorly known. Endemism in southern Australian waters is estimated at over 90% (Wilson & Allen 1987), and yet even the large and conspicuous medusae are often identified as species originally described from overseas. It should come as no surprise that scyphomedusae from remote places like the Kimberley region of tropical Western Australia remain poorly known; however, it is somewhat curious that the scyphomedusae of the Great Barrier Reef region remain largely enigmatic as well. Of the 12 new species of scyphozoans that Haeckel (1880) added to the Australian fauna, only seven were from the tropics and only two of these have been found again. Von Lendenfeld (1884a, 1884b) summarized the scyphozoans of the Southern Hemisphere, enumerating 25 species from Australia; of the three species he added as new, none were from tropical waters.

Across tropical Australia only 38 species of scyphomedusae are previously reported, many of them likely misidentified. Given the propensity of pelagic coelenterates to become introduced or invasive pests (Brodeur, Mills, Overland, Walters, & Schumacher 1999; Greenberg, Garthwaite, & Potts 1996; Mills 1995, 2001), the need for baseline knowledge on Australian fauna cannot be overstated. Throughout the past decade, we have extensively sampled the jellyfish fauna along the coastlines of Australia as a starting point. The purpose of this paper is to describe two new species of scyphomedusae from tropical Australian waters as part of a comprehensive review of the medusae and ctenophores of Australia.

The first of these new species is assigned to the hitherto monotypic genus *Sanderia*, which can easily be distinguished from other genera in the family Pelagiidae by possessing 16 rhopalia and tentacles in alterna-

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