



Range: Alaska to California

Habitat: subtidal to 200 meters, sandy silt to clay

Comments: The question concerning the status of Amphiodia digitata species was discussed. No one involved with sampling between Barbara and San Diego had identified any A. digitata. Any specimens approaching the description of A. digitata were small (2-3 mm) and could have been juvenile A. urtica. Dr. Ann Musc (Cataline Marine Lab.) and Mary Bergen (U.S.C.) (as communicated by Sue Williams) both feel that A. digitata is really just juv A. urtica. Jack Word (Univ. of Washington) (personnel communication) feels that A. digitata and A. urtica are both valid species; he has excellent specimens of A. digitata from Pt. Conception (6-7 mm disk), Santa Monica Bay, Palos Verdes and San Diego. He noted that this species seems to prefer coarser sediments while A. urtica seems to prefer the finer grained sediments.

Juvenile specimens of Amphiodia (2mm) are a problem. At stage of development spines occur has not been determined. If Amphiodia can occur in large number, particularly in clean area much time can be spent identifying these animals. Jack Word has noted the spines to present on specimens 0.5 mm with the aid of a compound microscope. The spines were observed in the area above the genital slits. When dealing with several hundred specimens the use of a compound microscope would greatly increase the time necessary for identifying. For simplification, specimens 2 mm less should be called Amphiodia sp. when spines are not clearly evident.

Voucher Corrections:

Amphiodia urtica: Jack Word pointed out that A. urtica and A. digitata are probably the same species. Since Clark, 1911 lists the two species as separate subgenera and until a complete life history study of the species can be completed, the two species must be considered as separate species.

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Voucher #: LACo 21

Literature: Clark, H.L., 1911
May, R.M., 1924
Nielsen, E., 1932
Boolootian, R.A. and D. Leighton, 1966
Work, J.Q., 1984 (Unpublished Manuscript)

Primary Diagnostic Characters: aboral disk scaled;
three pairs of oral papillae;
ventral interradiial scales modified with
small hyaline forked tips;
outermost disk scales with modified
hyaline forked tips;
disk scales along genital slit area
with modified scales having
hyaline forked tips

Related Species and Character Differences:

Amphiodia digitata Nielsen, 1932
modified scales having hyaline forked
tips only found on outermost disk
scales

Amphiodia occidentalis (Lyman, 1860)
no modified scales having hyaline forked
tips found on disk

Synonyms: Amphiura urtica Lyman 1860
Ophiophragmus urtica Fell 1962