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Post Box No. 1603, Cochin - 682 018
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Recent gorgonid resources of Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay, India

Molly Varghese, Rani Mary George and C. Kasinathan

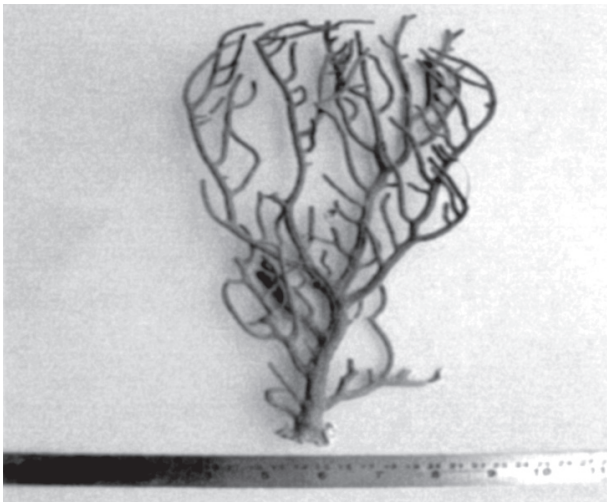
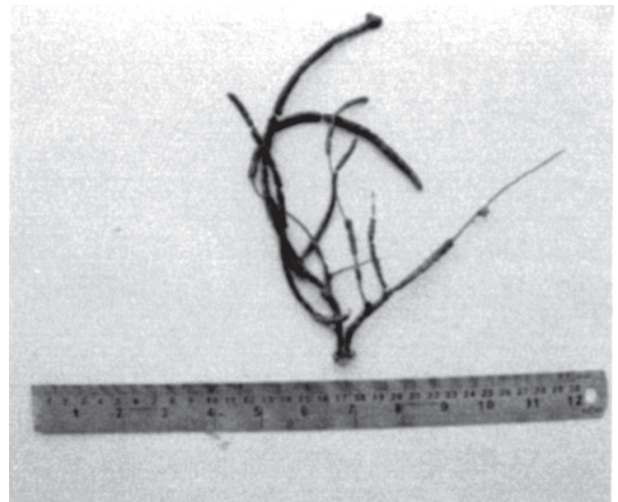
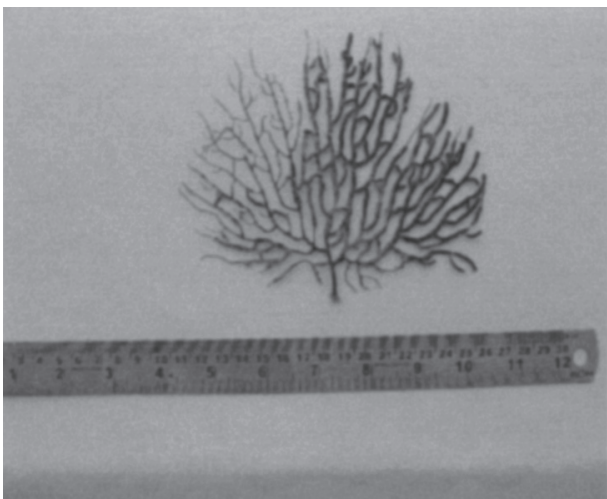
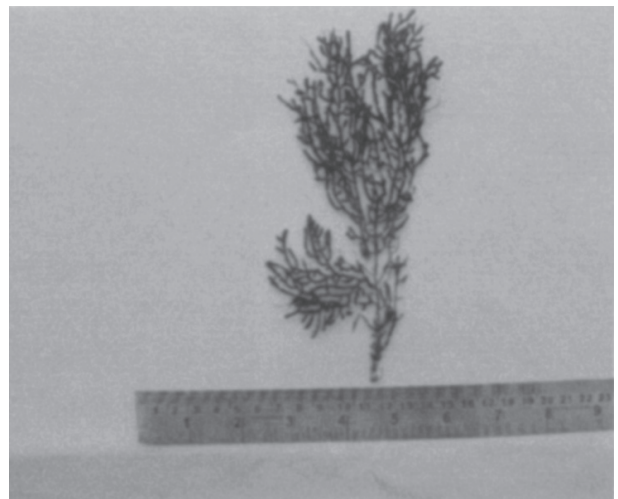
Mandapam Regional Centre of Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Mandapam Camp

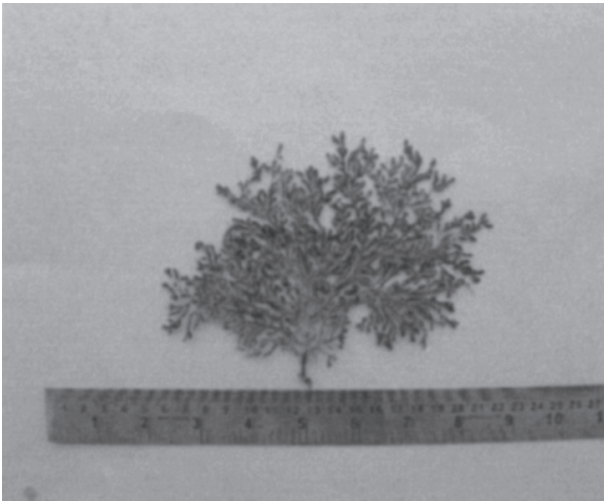
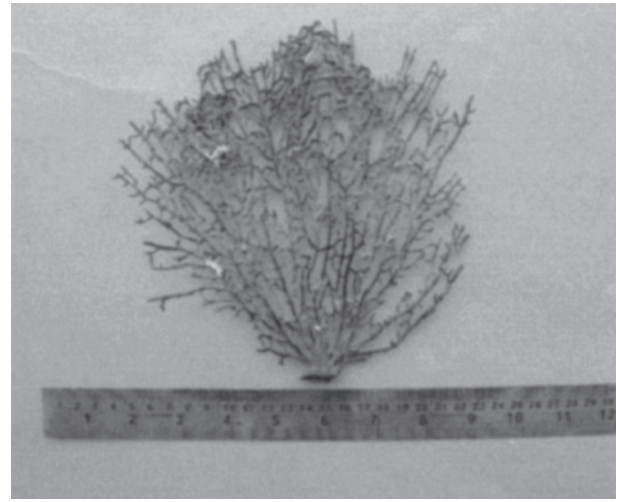
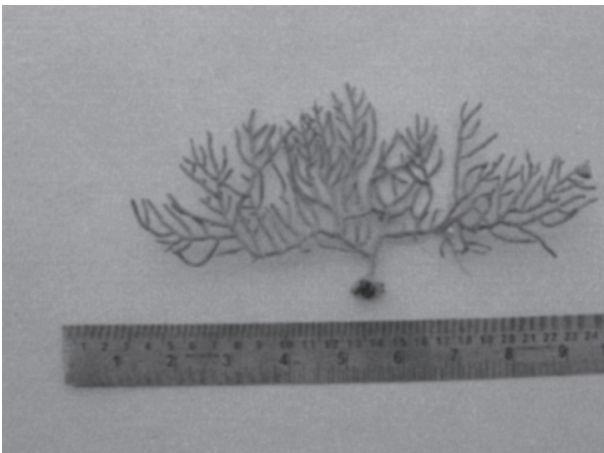
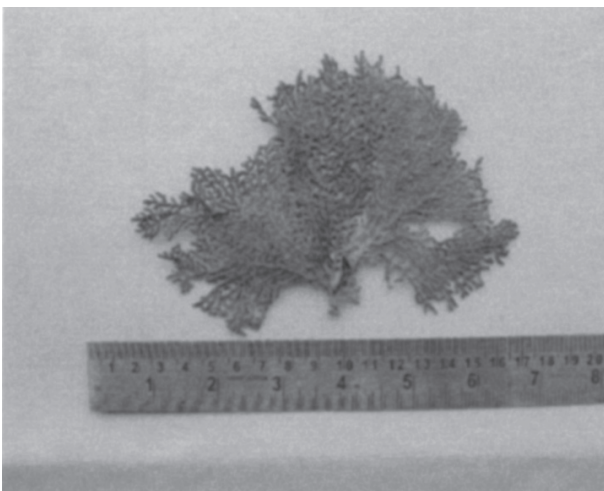
The colourful seafans have been objects of attraction to man and because of aesthetic reasons these

animals have been collected all over the world. The discovery of prostaglandins in gorgonids and their

Table 1. Distribution of gorgonids in different centres

Sl. No.	Species/ Centres with location	Nallath- anni N09° 6.61' E78° 35.13'	Keela- karai N09° 13.66' E78° 47.17'	Pamban N09° 16.99' E79° 12.65'	Kundugal N09° 15.49' E79° 13.29'	Krusadai Island N09° 15.05' E79° 12.80'	Dhanush- kodi N09° 12.00' E79° 22.81'	Sangumal N09° 17.69' E79° 19.61'	Ramesw- aram N09° 16.87' E79° 18.91'	Karayoor N09° 16.55' E79° 19.00'
1	<i>Subergorgia suberosa</i>	+	-	-	+	+	-	+	+	+
2	<i>Plexauroides praelonga</i>	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	<i>Echinomuricea indica</i>	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-
4	<i>Echinogorgia reticulata</i>	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	<i>Echinogorgia complexa</i>	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	<i>Heterogorgia flabellum</i>	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	<i>Leptogorgia australiensis</i>	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	+
8	<i>Juncella juncea</i>	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-
9	<i>Gorgonella umbraculum</i>	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Fig. 1. *Subergorgia suberosa*Fig. 2. *Plexauroides praelonga*Fig. 3. *Echinomuricea indica*Fig. 4. *Echinogorgia reticulata*

Fig. 5. *Echinogorgia complexa*Fig. 6. *Heterogorgia flabellum*Fig. 7. *Leptogorgia australiensis*Fig. 8. *Juncella juncea*Fig. 9. *Georgonella umbraculum*

use in drug manufacturing industry have led to the detailed study on this resource in Gulf of Mannar by CMFRI during 1980-'87. Subsequently, several samples collected during FORV Sagar Sampada cruises were also studied.

Realising the necessity to conserve, the fishing of this resource from this area is banned since July 2001. Hence, to understand the availability of this resource, an underwater survey was undertaken with the help of a diver during 2006-07. Nallathanni, Krusadai, Poomarichan, Pullivasal, Manauli and Manauli putty islands in Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve and the reef areas between Thonithurai and Mandapam and near Rameswaram in Palk Bay were surveyed. Apart from this, the specimens were also collected from the incidental catches brought by the fishing boats at landing centres at Keelakarai, Pamban, Kundugal and

Dhanushkodi in Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve and those from Rameswaram, Karayoor and Sangumal from Palk Bay were also examined.

During this study, nine species of gorgonids were collected from different centres. They are: *Subergorgia suberosa*, *Plexauroides praelonga*, *Echinomuricea indica*, *Echinogorgia reticulata*, *E. complexa*, *Heterogorgia flabellum*, *Leptogorgia australiensis*, *Juncella juncea* and *Gorgonella umbraculum* (Figs. 1-9). These nine species belong to eight genera, five families, two suborders under the order Gorgonacea.

From the Table, it is clear that *Subergorgia suberosa* is available in majority of centres. While surveying with a skin diver in Poomarichan, Pullivasal, Manauli putty and Manauli islands in Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve and in the coral reefs between Thonithurai and Mandapam in Palk Bay, Gorgonids were not observed in shallow waters of 3-5 m depth. So, more investigations in deeper areas with the help of Scuba divers are required to arrive at reliable conclusions on the availability and quantification of the gorgonid resources.