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The non-Siphonophoran Hydrozoa (Cnidaria) of Salento, Italy with notes on their life-cycles: an illustrated guide

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Table of contents

Abstract	5
Introduction	6
Material and methods	6
Results	8
Systematic account	8
Class HYDROIDOMEDUSA Claus, 1877	8
Subclass ANTHOMEDUSAE Haeckel, 1879	8
Order FILIFERA Kühn, 1913	9
Family Bougainvilliidae Lütken, 1850	9
<i>Bougainvillia muscus</i> (Allman, 1863)	9
<i>Bougainvillia nana</i> Hartlaub, 1911	10
<i>Dicoryne conferta</i> (Alder, 1856)	12
<i>Garveia grisea</i> (Motz-Kossowska, 1905)	13
<i>Pachycordyle napolitana</i> Weismann, 1883	14
<i>Pachycordyle pusilla</i> (Motz-Kossowska, 1905)	15
<i>Rhizorhagium arenosum</i> (Alder, 1862)	16
Family Cytaeidiidae L. Agassiz, 1862	17
<i>Perarella schneideri</i> (Motz-Kossowska, 1905)	17
Family Hydractiniidae L. Agassiz, 1862	19
<i>Stylactaria fucicola</i> (M. Sars, 1857)	19
<i>Stylactaria inermis</i> (Allman, 1872)	20
Family Eucodoniidae Schuchert, 1996	21
<i>Eucodonium brownei</i> Hartlaub, 1907	21
Family Eudendriidae L. Agassiz, 1862	22
<i>Eudendrium album</i> Nutting, 1898	22
<i>Eudendrium armatum</i> Tichomiroff, 1887	24
<i>Eudendrium capillare</i> Alder, 1856	25
<i>Eudendrium carneum</i> Clarke, 1882	26
<i>Eudendrium glomeratum</i> Picard, 1951	28
<i>Eudendrium merulum</i> Watson, 1985	29
<i>Eudendrium moulouyensis</i> Marques, Pena Cantero and Vervoort, 2000	30
<i>Eudendrium racemosum</i> (Cavolini, 1785)	32
<i>Eudendrium rameum</i> (Pallas, 1766)	33
<i>Eudendrium ramosum</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	34
<i>Eudendrium simplex</i> Pieper, 1884	36
Family Oceaniidae Eschscholtz, 1929	37
<i>Corydophora caspia</i> (Pallas, 1771)	37
<i>Corydendrium parasiticum</i> (Linnaeus, 1767)	38
<i>Turritopsis dohrnii</i> (Weismann, 1883)	40
<i>Rhizogeton nudus</i> Broch, 1910	41
Family Pandeidae Haeckel, 1879	42
<i>Amphinema bouillonii</i> Schuchert, 2007	42
<i>Amphinema dinema</i> (Péron and Lesueur, 1810)	44
<i>Amphinema rugosum</i> (Mayer, 1900)	45
Family Ptilocodiidae Coward, 1909	47
<i>Thecocodium brieni</i> Bouillon, 1967	47
Order CAPITATA Kühn, 1913	48
Family Cladonematidae Gegenbaur, 1856	48
<i>Cladonema radiatum</i> Dujardin, 1843	48
<i>Eleutheria dichotoma</i> Quatrefages, 1842	49
Family Corynidae Johnston, 1836	51
<i>Coryne muscoides</i> (Linnaeus, 1761)	51
<i>Coryne pintneri</i> Schneider, 1898	52
<i>Coryne pusilla</i> Gaertner, 1774	53
<i>Slabberia halterata</i> Forbes, 1846	55
<i>Stauridiosarsia ophiogaster</i> (Haeckel, 1879)	56
<i>Stauridiosarsia producta</i> (Wright, 1858)	57
Family Pennariidae McCrady, 1859	59
<i>Pennaria disticha</i> Goldfuss, 1820	59
Family Tubulariidae Fleming, 1828	60
<i>Ectopleura dumortierii</i> (Van Beneden, 1844)	60
<i>Ectopleura wrighti</i> Petersen, 1979	62

Family Cladocorynidae Allman, 1872	63
<i>Cladocoryne floccosa</i> Rotch, 1871	63
Family Porpitidae Goldfuss, 1818	64
<i>Porpita porpita</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	64
<i>Veella veella</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	66
Family Zancleidae Russell, 1953	67
<i>Halocoryne epizoica</i> Hadzi, 1917	67
<i>Zanclea costata</i> Gegenbaur, 1856	69
<i>Zanclea giancarloii</i> Boero, Bouillon and Gravili, 2000	70
<i>Zanclea sessilis</i> (Gosse, 1853)	72
Subclass LEPTOMEDUSAE Haeckel, 1866 (1879)	74
Order CONICA Broch, 1910	74
Family Aglaopheniidae Marktanner-Turneretscher, 1890	74
<i>Aglaophenia elongata</i> Meneghini, 1845	74
<i>Aglaophenia harpago</i> von Schenck, 1965	75
<i>Aglaophenia kirchenpaueri</i> (Heller, 1868)	76
<i>Aglaophenia octodonta</i> (Heller, 1868)	78
<i>Aglaophenia picardi</i> Svoboda, 1979	79
<i>Aglaophenia pluma</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	81
<i>Aglaophenia tubiformis</i> Marktanner-Turneretscher, 1890	82
Family Campanulinidae Hincks, 1868	83
<i>Lafoeina tenuis</i> G.O. Sars, 1874	83
Family Eirenidae Haeckel, 1879	84
<i>Eirene viridula</i> (Péron and Lesueur, 1810)	84
<i>Eugymnanthea inquilina</i> Palombi, 1935	86
<i>Eutima gracilis</i> (Forbes & Goodsir, 1851)	87
Family Haleciidae Hincks, 1868	88
<i>Halecium beanii</i> (Johnston, 1838)	88
<i>Halecium labrosum</i> Alder, 1859	89
<i>Halecium mediterraneum</i> Weismann, 1883	90
<i>Halecium nanum</i> Alder, 1859	92
<i>Halecium petrosum</i> Stechow, 1919	93
<i>Halecium pusillum</i> (M. Sars, 1857)	94
<i>Halecium tenellum</i> Hincks, 1861	96
<i>Hydrodendron mirabile</i> (Hincks, 1866)	97
Family Halopterididae Millard, 1962	98
<i>Antennella secundaria</i> (Gmelin, 1791)	98
<i>Antennella siliquosa</i> (Hincks, 1877)	100
<i>Halopteris catharina</i> (Johnston, 1833)	101
<i>Halopteris diaphana</i> (Heller, 1868)	102
Family Hebellidae Fraser, 1912	104
<i>Anthohebella parasitica</i> (Ciamician, 1880)	104
<i>Hebella brochii</i> (Hadzi, 1913)	105
<i>Hebella scandens</i> (Bale, 1888)	106
<i>Scandia gigas</i> (Pieper, 1884)	107
Family Kirchenpaueriidae Stechow, 1921	108
<i>Kirchenpaueria pinnata</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	108
<i>Ventromma halecioides</i> (Alder, 1859)	110
Family Lafoeidae A. Agassiz, 1865	111
<i>Acryptolaria conferta</i> (Allman, 1877)	111
<i>Filellum serpens</i> (Hassall, 1848)	112
Family Laodiceidae L. Agassiz, 1862	114
<i>Laodicea undulata</i> (Forbes and Goodsir, 1851)	114
Family Lovenellidae Russell, 1953	115
<i>Campalecium torreyi</i> (Motz-Kossowska, 1911)	115
<i>Hydranthea margarica</i> (Hincks, 1862)	117
<i>Lovenella gracilis</i> Clarke, 1882	119
Family Mitrocomidae Haeckel, 1879	120
<i>Mitrocoma annae</i> Haeckel, 1864	120
Family Plumulariidae McCrady, 1859	121
<i>Monothecha obliqua</i> (Johnston, 1847)	121
<i>Monothecha posidoniae</i> Picard, 1952	123
<i>Nemertesia antennina</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	124
<i>Nemertesia ramosa</i> (Lamarck, 1816)	125

<i>Plumularia setacea</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	127
Family Sertulariidae Lamouroux, 1812	128
<i>Dynamena disticha</i> (Bosc, 1802)	128
<i>Sertularella crassicaulis</i> (Heller, 1868)	130
<i>Sertularella ellisii</i> (Deshayes and Milne-Edwards, 1836)	131
<i>Sertularella gayi</i> (Lamouroux, 1821)	132
<i>Sertularella mediterranea</i> Hartlaub, 1901	133
<i>Sertularella polyzonias</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	135
<i>Sertularia perpusilla</i> Stechow, 1919	136
Family Syntheciidae Marktanner-Turneretscher, 1890	137
<i>Synthecium evansi</i> (Ellis and Solander, 1786)	137
Order PROBOSCOIDA Broch, 1910	138
Family Campanulariidae Johnston, 1837	138
<i>Campanularia hincksii</i> Alder, 1856	138
<i>Clytia gracilis</i> (M. Sars, 1850)	140
<i>Clytia hemisphaerica</i> (Linnaeus, 1767)	142
<i>Clytia hummelincki</i> (Leloup, 1935)	143
<i>Clytia linearis</i> (Thornely, 1900)	145
<i>Clytia noliformis</i> (McCrary, 1859)	147
<i>Clytia paulensis</i> (Vanhöffen, 1910)	148
<i>Clytia viridicans</i> (Leuckart, 1856)	149
<i>Gastroblasta raffaelei</i> Lang, 1886	151
<i>Obelia dichotoma</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	152
<i>Obelia geniculata</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	154
<i>Obelia longissima</i> (Pallas, 1766)	155
<i>Orthopyxis asymmetrica</i> Stechow, 1919	157
<i>Orthopyxis crenata</i> (Hartlaub, 1901)	158
<i>Orthopyxis integra</i> (MacGillivray, 1842)	159
Subclass LIMNOMEDUSAE Kramp, 1938	161
Family Olindiidae Haeckel, 1879	161
<i>Olindias phosphorica</i> (Delle Chiaje, 1841)	161
Subclass TRACHYMEDUSAE Haeckel, 1866 (1879)	162
Family Geryoniidae Eschscholtz, 1829	162
<i>Liriope tetraphylla</i> (Chamisso and Eysenhardt, 1821)	162
Family Rhopalonematidae Russell, 1953	163
<i>Aglantha digitale</i> (O.F. Müller, 1776)	163
Conclusions	164
Acknowledgements	165
References	165

Abstract

The majority of Hydrozoa is represented by not readily noticeable, small species. In recent decades, however, taxonomic knowledge of the group has increased worldwide, with a significant number of investigations focused on the Mediterranean Sea. Over more than two decades, 115 species of hydrozoans were recorded from coastal waters along nearly 300 km of the Salento Peninsula (Apulia, Italy). For each species, records from different collections were merged into single sheets of a general database.

For each species, the following information is reported: description, cnidome, biology, occurrence in Salento, worldwide distribution, and bibliography. Descriptions refer to the benthic hydroid stage and, when present, also to the planktonic medusa stage. The 115 species of Hydrozoa, recorded along the Salento coastline, represent 25% of the Mediterranean Hydrozoa fauna (totaling 461 species), and nearly 3% of 3,702 world's known species covered in a recent monograph. Four species are non-indigenous, three of them with invasive behavior (*Clytia hummelincki*, *Clytia linearis*, and *Eudendrium carneum*), and one species now very common (*Eudendrium merulum*) in Salento. The complete life cycle of *Clytia paulensis* (Vanhöffen, 1910) is described for the first time.

Key words: Cnidaria, Hydrozoa, distribution, Salento

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