

The angel shark *Squatina squatina* prey of the isopod *Aegapheles deshaysiana*

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The isopod *Aegapheles deshaysiana* is distributed in the Mediterranean Sea and the northeast Atlantic, including the Azores, Canary and Madeira Islands, and the northwest coast of Africa at depths ranging between 50 and 146 m, with one record at circa 1105 m (Bruce 2004). Despite its wide distribution range, prey records (Bruce 2004) are rare and isolated for this species, with reports from the elasmobranch of *Cetorhinus maximus* and an unidentified shark (Rokicki 1985), and from teleosts of *Pomatomus saltator* (Bruce 2004), *Sardina pilchardus* (Ramdane and Trilles 2008) and *Pagellus bogaraveo* (Hermida et al. 2013).

Male and female *Aegapheles deshaysiana* were observed attached to the dorsal region of an angel shark *Squatina squatina* on several occasions during a scuba diving census in the Canary Islands between August 2006 and January 2015. Up to six *A. deshaysiana* were detected on pectoral, pelvic (Fig. 1a), dorsal and caudal fins, the tail (Fig. 1b), and claspers (Fig. 1c) from *S. squatina* individuals, between 2 and 40 m of depth, at the islands of Lanzarote, Fuerteventura, Tenerife and Gran Canaria. All events involved adult specimens that measured between 105 and 122 cm in total length, with no apparent damage in the fixation area.

The individuals of *A. deshaysiana* were identified based on Bruce (2004) and *S. squatina* (<http://elasmocan.org/about-us/angelshark-squatina-squatina/>) based on Compagno et al.

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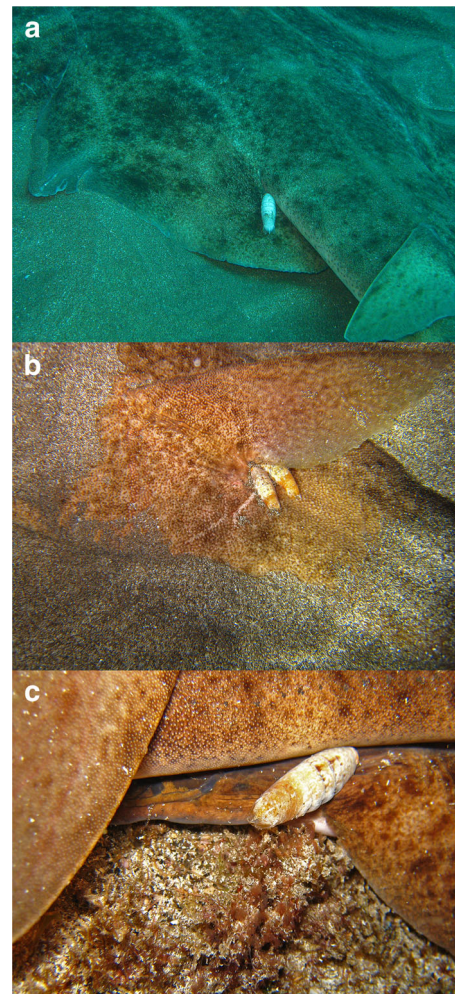


Fig. 1 Photographs in situ of the angel shark *Squatina squatina* with attachment of the isopod *Aegapheles deshaysiana* on the dorsal side of the **a** pelvic fin (female *A. deshaysiana*), **b** tail, which was buried in the sand, in way of the first dorsal fin insertion (two female *A. deshaysiana*) and **c** clasper (female *A. deshaysiana*)

(2005). The body length of whole specimens of *A. deshaysiana* was measured in dorsal view from the anterior margin of the head to the posterior of the pleotelson, using a micrometer eyepiece caliper, and ranged between 19.3 and 32.7 mm. The guts were distended with blood, confirming *S. squatina* as preys.

This is a novel and reliable long-term prey record for *A. deshaysiana* based on observations in its natural habitat compared to the existing, uncertain reports from catch landings. Additionally, it is an increase of its depth range with depths shallower than those reported thus far.

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