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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## Taxonomy of Euretidae (Porifera, Hexactinellida, Hexactinosida) of Campos Basin, southwestern Atlantic, with a description of a new species

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### Abstract

Fourteen species of hexactinellid sponges have been known from the southwestern Atlantic, 11 of which belong to the subclass Hexasterophora. Among these, only two belong to Hexactinosida Schrammen, 1903, namely *Aphrocallistes beatrix* Gray, 1858, *Dactylocalyx pumiceus* Stutchbury, 1841. The present study increases the number of southwestern Atlantic Hexasterophora to 13 species, adding two additional Hexactinosida, namely *Chonelasma choanoides* Schulze & Kirkpatrick, 1910 and *Eurete atlantica* sp. nov. The latter species is the first record of *Eurete* for the Atlantic Ocean, differing from the remaining 11 known species most conspicuously by the heavy spination of its pentactines.

**Key words:** Brazil, Hexasterophora, slope, sponges, taxonomy

### Introduction

Knowledge of southwestern Atlantic Hexactinellid biodiversity remains scarce. The taxonomy of these has been dealt with in only seven papers, namely Schulze (1887, 1899), Burton (1932, 1940), Mothes-de-Moraes (1977), Tabachnick (1990) and Lopes et al. (2005), which recorded only 14 species in total.

An increased effort towards a better understanding of deep-sea sponge biodiversity off the Brazilian coast is slowly changing this scenario, by permitting the study of old specimens as well as the collection of new materials through intensive dredging, trawling and grabbing by remotely operated vehicles (Lopes 2006). This effort has mostly been concentrated in Campos Basin, southeast Brazil.

Campos Basin occupies the sector between Vitória High (20.5°S) and Cabo Frio High (24°S) in the Brazilian continental margin, covering over 100,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Over 70% of this basin is located in depths greater than 200 m (Carminatti & Scarton 1991). The continental shelf in the area has a mean width of

approximately 100 km, and the shelf break varies from 80 to 130 m depth. The slope is 40 km wide in general, with a mean declivity of 2.5°, and a shallower base in the northern sector (1500 m versus 2000 m in the south) due to the presence of the Paraíba do Sul river submarine fan associated with the Almirante Câmara canyon (Brehme 1984). The intermediary slope (550–1200 m depth), where the samples reported here were collected, is characterized by fine-grained sand, coral banks and patches of sandy-mud and soft mud. This depth zone is under the influence of the Antarctic Intermediate Water (2–6°C, 34.2–34.6‰ salinity), which runs to the north (Viana et al. 1998; Amaral et al. 2004; Bentz et al. 2005).

Over 85% of the Brazilian crude oil and gas production originates from Campos Basin (off southeastern Brazil). In the face of the necessity of evaluating the environmental assets on exploration areas or potential exploration areas, Centro de Pesquisas e Desenvolvimento Leopoldo Américo Miguez de Mello/Petróleo Brasileiro S.A. (CENPES/PETROBRAS) has elaborated and co-ordinated

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the execution (ongoing) of Campos Basin Deep-waters Environmental Assessment Project (OCEANPROF). OCEANPROF's aim is the environmental characterization of northern and southern Campos Basin, between the isobaths of 700 and 2000 m.

The present study reports on two Euretidae collected in the deep waters of Campos Basin (off southeastern Brazil), including the first record of *Eurete* Semper, 1868 for the Atlantic Ocean.

## Material and methods

R/V *Astro Garoupa* made two cruises in 2003, using a small otter-trawl semi-balloon (OTSB) net ( $5.5 \times 1.0$  m) with the same dimensions as the OTSB no. 14 shrimp-trawl net. The demersal trawlings executed lasted 1.5 h each. Sponge samples analysed here came from 1059–1152 m depth.

The OCEANPROF collection deposited at Museu Nacional comprises 47 samples belonging to the Hexasterophora, only 17 of which are in a good enough state of preservation to permit their full identification and description.

The preparation of dissociated spicule and thick section mounts followed the procedures described by Lopes et al. (2005). The scanning electron microscopes used were a JEOL JSM-6460LV and a ZEISS DSM-940A, made available by CENPES/PETROBRAS.

Figure 1 shows the southeastern Brazilian coastline and indicates the collecting station at Campos Basin. This map was elaborated with the aid of the website ONLINE MAP CREATION (<http://www.aquarius.geomar.de/omc/>).

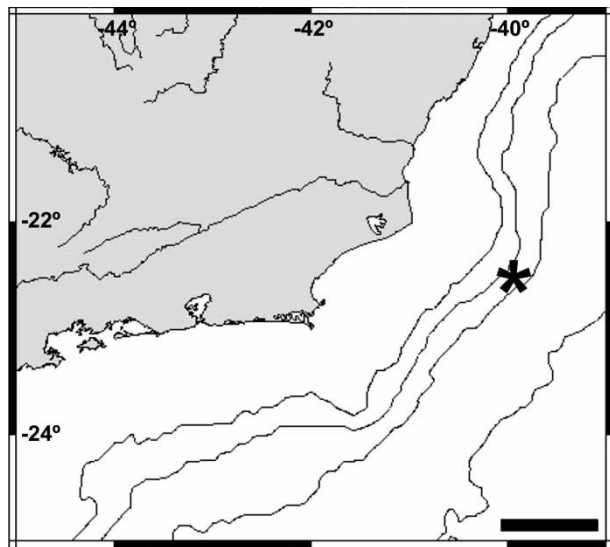


Figure 1. Map of the southeastern Brazilian coastline, with the collecting area (Campos Basin) indicated by an asterisk. The 200, 1000, 2000 and 3000 m deep isobaths are shown (scale = 100 km).

The following abbreviations have been used: CENPES, Centro de Pesquisas e Desenvolvimento Leopoldo Américo Miguez de Mello; CNPq, Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico; MNRJ, Porifera Collection, Museu Nacional/UFRJ; OCEANPROF, Campos Basin Deep-waters Environmental Assessment Project; PETROBRAS, Petróleo Brasileiro S.A.; REVIZEE, Evaluation of the Sustainable Potential of Life Resources in the Economic Exclusive Zone; UFRJ, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro; ZEE, Economic Exclusive Zone.

## Systematic results

Phylum Porifera Grant, 1836

Class Hexactinellida Schmidt, 1870

Order Hexactinosida Schrammen, 1903

Family Euretidae Zittel, 1877 *sensu* Reiswig & Wheeler, 2002

Genus *Eurete* Semper, 1868 *sensu* Reiswig & Wheeler, 2002

*Eurete atlantica* sp. nov. (Figure 2, Tables I, II)

**Holotype.** MNRJ 7330A, OCEANPROF 1, CENPES/UFRJ, stn. 4 (Campos Basin, RJ, start:  $22^{\circ}24.449'S$   $39^{\circ}55.280'W$ , end:  $22^{\circ}21.936'S$   $39^{\circ}53.602'W$ ), 1128–1135 m deep, col. R/V *Astro Garoupa*, demersal fisheries net, 07 February 2003.

**Diagnosis.** Only species of *Eurete* with irregular, mainly triangular dictyonal meshes, microtuberculated beams with inconspicuous nodes and without spines, heavily acanthose pentactines, rare scopules and onychexasters.

**Description.** The holotype is composed of a single erect, tubular fragment  $127 \times 66 \times 58$  mm (height  $\times$  body width  $\times$  base width), formed by a network of ramifying and anastomosing tubules in a tree-like pattern. The specimen is macerated and tubules are broken (Figure 2A). The body wall is thin, 1–3 mm wide and channelized with narrow, short epirhyses (Figure 2B, C) and aporhyses.

**Skeleton.** The dictyonal architecture is formed by irregular, mainly triangular meshes, 120–360  $\mu$ m in diameter – quadrangular and ovoid meshes also occur (Figure 2B, C); elongated and microspined spurs; microtuberculated beams 20–30  $\mu$ m thick; inconspicuous nodes without spines. Shallow cortical epirhyses and aporhyses may occur

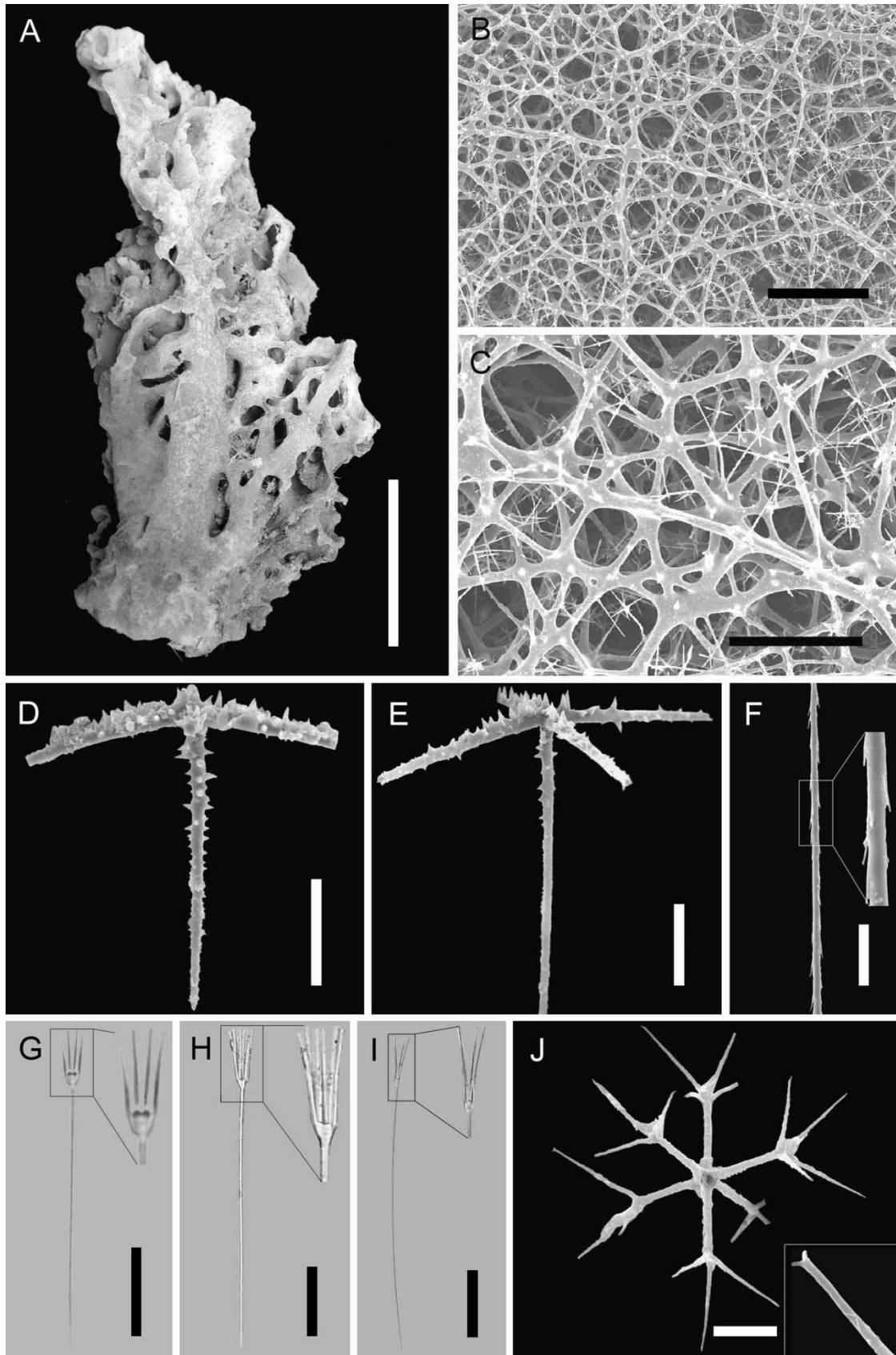


Figure 2. *Eurete atlantica* sp. nov., holotype. (A) Preserved specimen. (B, C). Scanning electron micrographs of dictyonal framework. (D–F, J). Scanning electron micrographs of spicules. (G–I) Optical microscopy of spicules: (D, E) pentactin; (F) uncinat; (G–I) scopule; (J) onychexaster (scales: A = 50 mm, B = 1 mm, C = 500  $\mu$ m, D–H = 50  $\mu$ m, I = 100  $\mu$ m, J = 20  $\mu$ m).

Table I. *Eurete atlantica* sp. nov. Dimensions of the spicules in  $\mu\text{m}$ : means  $\pm$  standard error<sub>n</sub> (smallest–largest).

| Holotype               | MNRJ 7330A                                   |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Pentactines</b>     |  |
| Tangential ray length  | 168.0 $\pm$ 36.4 <sub>15</sub><br>(115–240)  |
| Tangential ray width   | 17.0 $\pm$ 3.7 <sub>10</sub><br>(10–23)      |
| Proximal ray length    | 185.0 $\pm$ 27.4 <sub>7</sub><br>(160–240)   |
| Proximal ray width     | 13.6 $\pm$ 2.8 <sub>7</sub><br>(10–18)       |
| Uncinate length        | 501.8 $\pm$ 120.3 <sub>14</sub><br>(225–650) |
| Uncinate width         | 11.3 $\pm$ 6.5 <sub>10</sub><br>(3–23)       |
| Scopule length (total) | 366.0 $\pm$ 121.8 <sub>5</sub><br>(200–490)  |
| Scopule length (head)  | 58.3 $\pm$ 22.4 <sub>5</sub><br>(33–73)      |
| Scopule width (head)   | 20.8 $\pm$ 5.2 <sub>5</sub><br>(15–25)       |
| <b>Microscleres</b>    |  |
| Onychexaster diameter  | 85.2 $\pm$ 18.2 <sub>25</sub><br>(50–113)    |
| Primary ray length     | 25.3 $\pm$ 4.6 <sub>25</sub><br>(15–33)      |
| Secondary ray length   | 21.3 $\pm$ 7.0 <sub>25</sub><br>(8–33)       |

(Figure 2C). Dermalia and atrialia are acanthose pentactines.

**Spicules.** Heavily spined pentactines (Figure 2D, E) with slightly arched tangential rays, conical spines are reduced in size towards the ray tips; proximal ray similar to tangential ones, but less spined. Dermal and atrial pentactines similar, but the latter appear more abundant. Uncinates (Figure 2F) vary considerably in length and width, but usually possess long, thin barbs. Scopules (Figure 2G–I) rare, three to six slightly divergent terminations, apparently smooth, with a small tyle at the tine tips; straight or slightly curved axis, apparently smooth, tapering gradually. Only one kind of microscle: onychexasters (Figure 2J), with long primary rays, two to three secondary rays and very undeveloped terminations (Table I).

**Etymology.** The proposed name, *atlantica*, derives from this being the sole known species of *Eurete* to occur in the Atlantic Ocean.

**Observations.** Currently *Eurete* contains 11 species and two subspecies (*E. schmidtii kampeni* Ijima, 1927 and *E. schmidtii treubi* Ijima, 1927; Table II), all from the Pacific Ocean, mainly from the western

Pacific, from Japan to Indonesia. A single record has been made from the eastern Pacific, from off northern Peru (Lendenfeld 1915). *Eurete atlantica* sp. nov. is distinguished from other species of *Eurete* by its pentactins bearing large spines. Only two other species of *Eurete* possess acanthose pentactines, namely *E. lamellina* Tabachnick, 1988 and *E. spinosum* Lendenfeld, 1915. Nevertheless, the former differs from the new species by its regular spines distributed along the rays of the pentactines (as seen in Tabachnick 1988: plate 3, Figure 7). Additionally, the uncinate and the scopules of *E. lamellina* are much larger than those seen in the new species (1600–4000  $\mu\text{m}$  versus 225–650  $\mu\text{m}$  long and 1180–1800/240–300  $\mu\text{m}$  versus 200–490/33–73  $\mu\text{m}$  total length/head length, respectively). Microscleres in *E. lamellina* are oxyhexasters, oxyhexactins and derivatives, with short primary and long secondary rays.

*Eurete spinosum* differs from the new species through its possession of differentiated dictyonal meshes, where the atrial ones are considerably more regular. Additionally, the former species has microspined scopules and abundant oxyhexasters with long secondary rays. Lendenfeld (1915) distinguished his new species *E. spinosum* from *E. bowerbanki* Schulze, 1886 and *E. marshalli* Schulze, 1886 mainly by the presence of acanthose pentactines, reported as being much more spined than those found in the latter two species.

Genus *Chonelasma* Schulze, 1886 *sensu* Reiswig & Wheeler, 2002

*Chonelasma choanoides* Schulze & Kirkpatrick, 1910 (Figures 3–7, Tables III, IV)

**Synonymy.** *Chonelasma lamella choanoides* Schulze & Kirkpatrick, 1910: 302; Schulze & Kirkpatrick, 1911: 48; Ijima, 1927: 369. *Chonelasma lamella* Schulze, 1886: 76 (in part); Schulze, 1887: 321 (in part); Barthel & Tendal, 1994: 61 (in part). *Chonelasma choanoides* Reid, 1963: 226; Reid, 1964: xcix; Janussen et al., 2004: 1860. *Chonelasma* sp. Schulze, 1887: 326. *Hexactinella grimaldii* Burton, 1928: 16 (in part).

**Studied material.** MNRJ 7317, 7318, 7319, OCEANPROF 1, CENPES/UFRJ, stn. 4 (Campos Basin, RJ, start: 22°24.449'S 39°55.280'W, end: 22°21.936'S 39°53.602'W), 1128–1135 m deep, col. R/V *Astro Garoupa*, demersal fisheries net, 07 February 2003. MNRJ 7994, 7995, OCEANPROF 2, CENPES/UFRJ, stn. A16 (Campos Basin, RJ, start: 22°16.304'S 39°53.360'W, end: 22°13.124'S 39°52.223'W), 1059–1110 m deep, col. R/V *Astro*

Table II. Comparative morphological and distributional data for all known species of *Eurete* Semper, 1868.

| Species  | Meshes  | Beams/nodes   | Pentactins                         | Microscleres                                  | Observations  | Locality/depth range           |
|--|---|---|------------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------|
| <i>Eurete atlantica</i> sp. nov.                           | Irregular, triangular, quadrangular and oval                                  | Microtuberculated/slender                                       | With large spines                  | Onychexasters microacanthose)                 | Rare scopules, with unbarbed terminations   | Brazil/1128–1135 m             |
| <i>E. bowerbanki</i> Schulze, 1886 (Schulze, 1887)         | Irregular   | Slightly tuberculated/slender or stoutish                       | Smooth?                            | Oxyhexactins and oxyhexasters                 | Scopules with barbed terminations   | Japan/146–366 m                |
| <i>E. freelandi</i> Ijima, 1927 (original description)     | Irregular   | Irregularly tuberculated and smooth in parts/more or less stout | Rugose extremities                 | Oxyhexaster, with hemihexasterose derivations | Scopules with finger-like or slightly thick terminations  | Indonesia/275 m                |
| <i>E. irregularis</i> Okada, 1932 (original description)   | Regular and elongated, quadrangular   | Smooth/?  | Microacanthose                     | Onychexasters (smooth)                        | Uncinates absent  | Southern Sea of Okhotsk/3240 m |
| <i>E. lamellina</i> Tabachnick, 1988(original description) | Irregular   | Smooth or acanthose/?   | With regular thorns along rays     | Oxyhexactins and derivates, oxyhexasters      | Scopules with small terminations  | Western Central Pacific/1570 m |
| <i>E. marshalli</i> Schulze, 1886 (Schulze, 1887)          | Mainly quadrangular   | Smooth or slightly acanthose/stout and acanthose                | Rugose                             | Oxyhexasters                                  | Scopules with pear-shaped terminations bearing barbs  | Western Central Pacific/256 m  |
| <i>E. nipponica</i> Okada, 1932 (original description)     | Regular to irregular, triangular or quadrangular                              | Microtuberculated/stout   | Microtuberculated                  | Onychexasters and oxyhexasters                | Scopules with simple shafts, smooth with rugose extremity and terminations as marginally spined clubs | Japan/191 m                    |
| <i>E. schmidtii</i> Schulze, 1886 (Schulze, 1887)          | Regular, mainly quadrangular  | Smooth or slightly acanthose/thick, moderately acanthose        | Rugose                             | Oxyhexasters (rugose)                         | Scopules with sharp terminations, smooth or barbed  | Japan, Philippines/187 m       |
| <i>E. sacculiformes</i> Okada, 1932 (original description) | Irregular, triangular or quadrangular   | Microtuberculated/thick   | Nearly smooth                      | Onychexasters (smooth)                        | Scopules microacanthose   | Japan/247 m                    |
| <i>E. simplicissima</i> Semper, 1868 (Schulze, 1887)       | Quadrangular and triangular   | Smooth or slightly acanthose/slender                            | –                                  | Oxyhexasters                                  | Without free spicules, apart from oxyhexasters  | Philippines?                   |
| <i>E. spinosum</i> Lendenfeld, 1915 (original description) | Irregular, triangular or quadrangular (dermal face) and regular (atrial face) | Acanthose/?   | With large thorns                  | Oxyhexasters                                  | Scopules microacanthose; uncinates absent?  | Peru/4062 m                    |
| <i>E. trachydocus</i> Ijima, 1927 (original description)   | Irregular, triangular or quadrangular   | Tuberculated/slender, microtuberculated                         | Microtuberculated or nearly smooth | Oxyhexasters                                  | Scopules with barbed terminations   | Indonesia/204 m                |

?, information lacking.

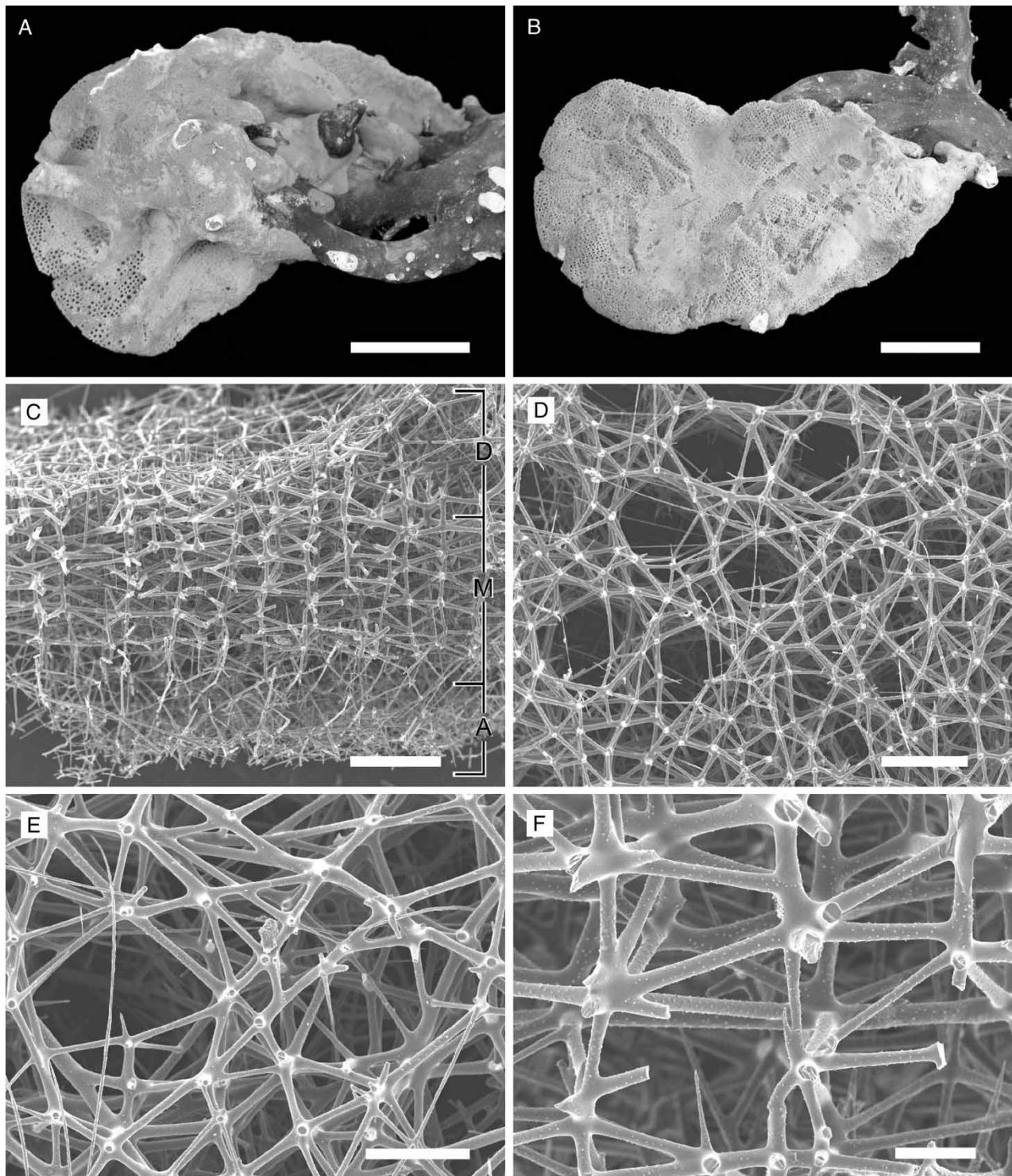


Figure 3. *Chonelasma choanoides* Schulze & Kirkpatrick, 1910. Preserved specimen (MNRJ 8009A). (A) Dermal surface. (B) Atrial surface. (C–F) Scanning electron micrographs of dictyonal framework of MNRJ 7995: (C) oblique view (D = dermal layer, M = middle layer, A = atrial layer); (D, E) dermal skeleton; (F) middle lamella (scales: A, B = 50 mm, C, D = 1 mm, E = 500  $\mu$ m, F = 200  $\mu$ m).

*Garoupa*, demersal fisheries net, 22 August 2003. MNRJ 7999, OCEANPROF 2, CENPES/UFRJ, stn. A4-2 (Campos Basin, RJ, start: 22°24.419'S 39°55.556'W, end: 22°21.438'S 39°53.559'W),

1105–1127 m deep, col. R/V *Astro Garoupa*, demersal fisheries net, 29 August 2003. MNRJ 8009A, OCEANPROF 2, CENPES/UFRJ, stn. A4-1 (Campos Basin, RJ, start: 22°23.943'S 39°54.679'W, end:

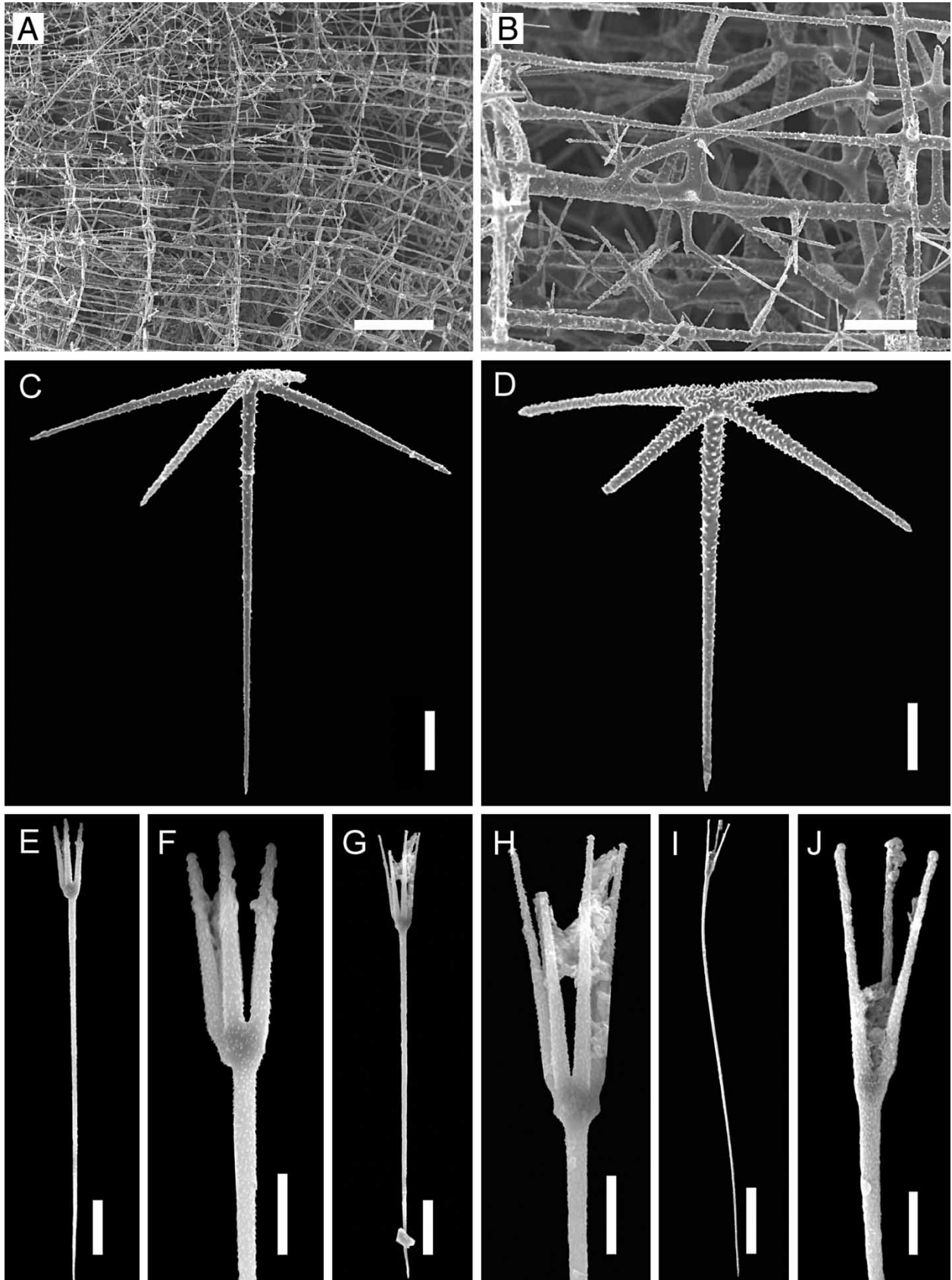


Figure 4. *Chonelasma choanoides* Schulze & Kirkpatrick, 1910. Scanning electron micrographs (A, B: MNRJ 7995; C, D: MNRJ 7319; E, F, I, J: MNRJ 8009A; G, H: MNRJ 7318). (A, B) Atrial skeleton. (C) Dermal pentactin. (D) Atrial pentactin. (E–J) Scopule (scales: A = 1 mm, B = 200  $\mu$ m, C, D = 100  $\mu$ m, E, G = 20  $\mu$ m, F, H, J = 10  $\mu$ m, I = 50  $\mu$ m).



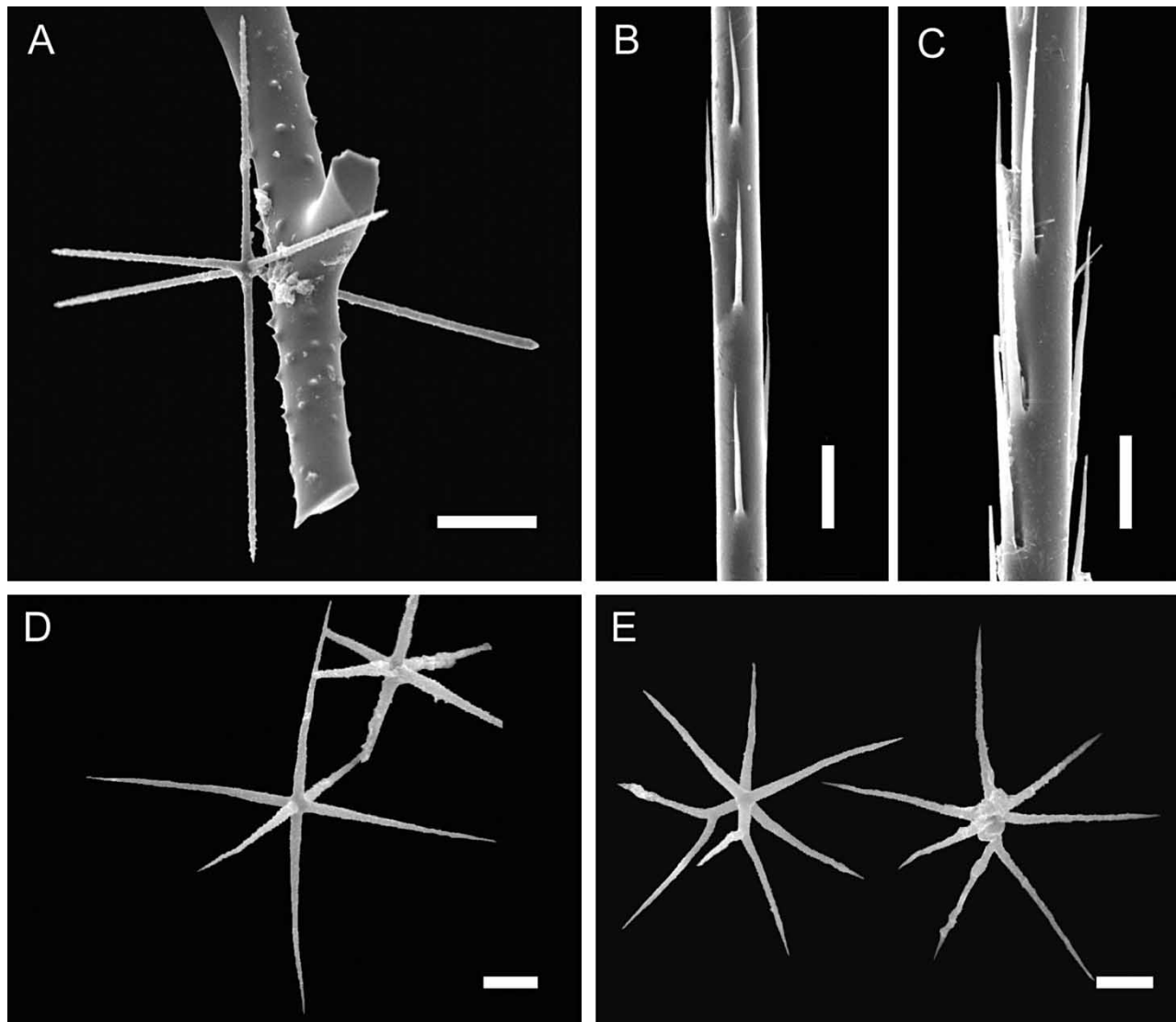


Figure 5. *Chonelasma choanoides* Schulze & Kirkpatrick, 1910. Scanning electron micrographs (A, B, D: MNRJ 7994; C: MNRJ 7995; E: MNRJ 7319). (A) Hexactine. (B, C) Uncinate. (D) Oxyhexactin. (E) Hemioxyhexasters (scales: A = 50  $\mu\text{m}$ , B, C = 20  $\mu\text{m}$ , D, E = 10  $\mu\text{m}$ ).

22°20.922'S 39°52.915'W), 1150–1152 m deep, col. R/V *Astro Garoupa*, demersal fisheries net, 25 August 2003.

**Diagnosis.** *Chonelasma* with a dictyonal framework divided into three layers, only the dermal one bearing channels; dictyonal beams acanthose in varied degrees. Microscleres are hexactines, hexasters and hemihexasters, which can have oxy-, onycho- and disco-tips.

**Description.** The specimens are fragmented, and the majority of them are attached to corals. Only two of the studied specimens appear as vaseform (MNRJ 7318 and 7995); the largest fragment/specimen is 190 × 110 mm (length × width; Figure 3A, B). The thickness of the walls vary between 4 and

17 mm. Consistency is rigid and breakable, and the surface is rough. The dermal surface (Figure 3A) is quite distinct from the atrial one, the latter exhibiting a conspicuous quadrangular meshed pattern (Figure 3B). Both the dermal and atrial surfaces have a layer of acanthose pentactines.

**Skeleton.** The dictyonal framework is divided into three distinct layers (Figure 3C), only the dermal one being channelized. The dermal layer (Figure 3D, E) consists of a network of acanthose dictyonal beams forming regular meshes 625–2250  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter; this layer is completely perforated by a system of channels (epirhyses), distributed without any clear arrangement (Figure 3E). The intermediary layer is dense and unchannelized (Figure 3F). The thin atrial layer (Figure 4A, B)

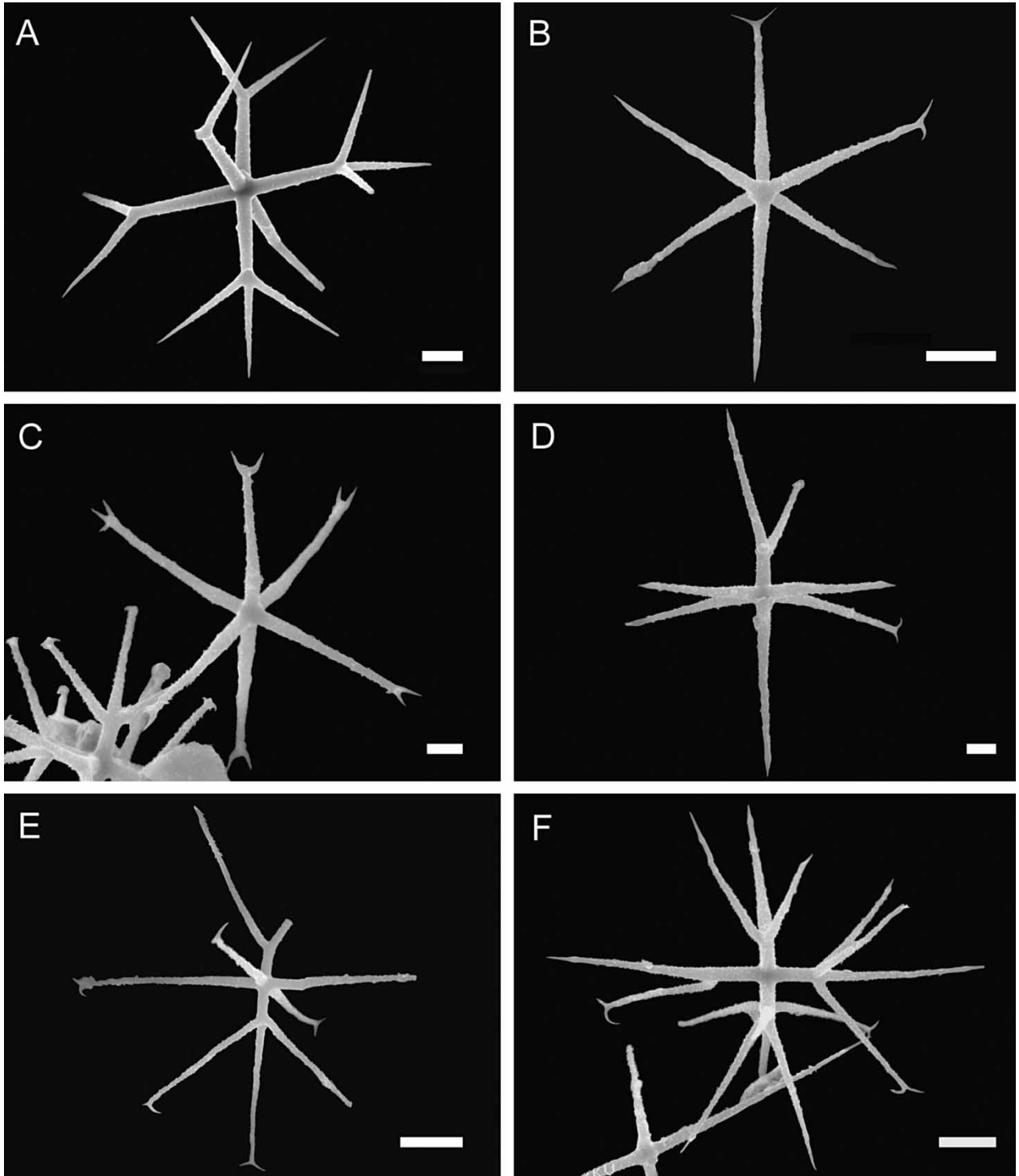


Figure 6. *Chonelasma choanoides* Schulze & Kirkpatrick, 1910. Scanning electron micrographs (A–D, F: MNRJ 7319; E: 7318). (A) Oxyhexaster. (B, C) Onychexactin. (D, E) Hemionychohexasters. (F) Onychexaster (scales = 10  $\mu$ m).

is formed by an irregular network of fused, medium to small-sized hexactins; the free rays of these hexactines make the atrial surface dense and markedly hispid; polygonal meshes are not clearly seen in this layer. In specimens that are more

macerated, only a vestigial atrial layer can be found. The spination on dictyonal beams is highly variable among specimens. These can be completely smooth, moderately acanthose, or completely spined (Table III).

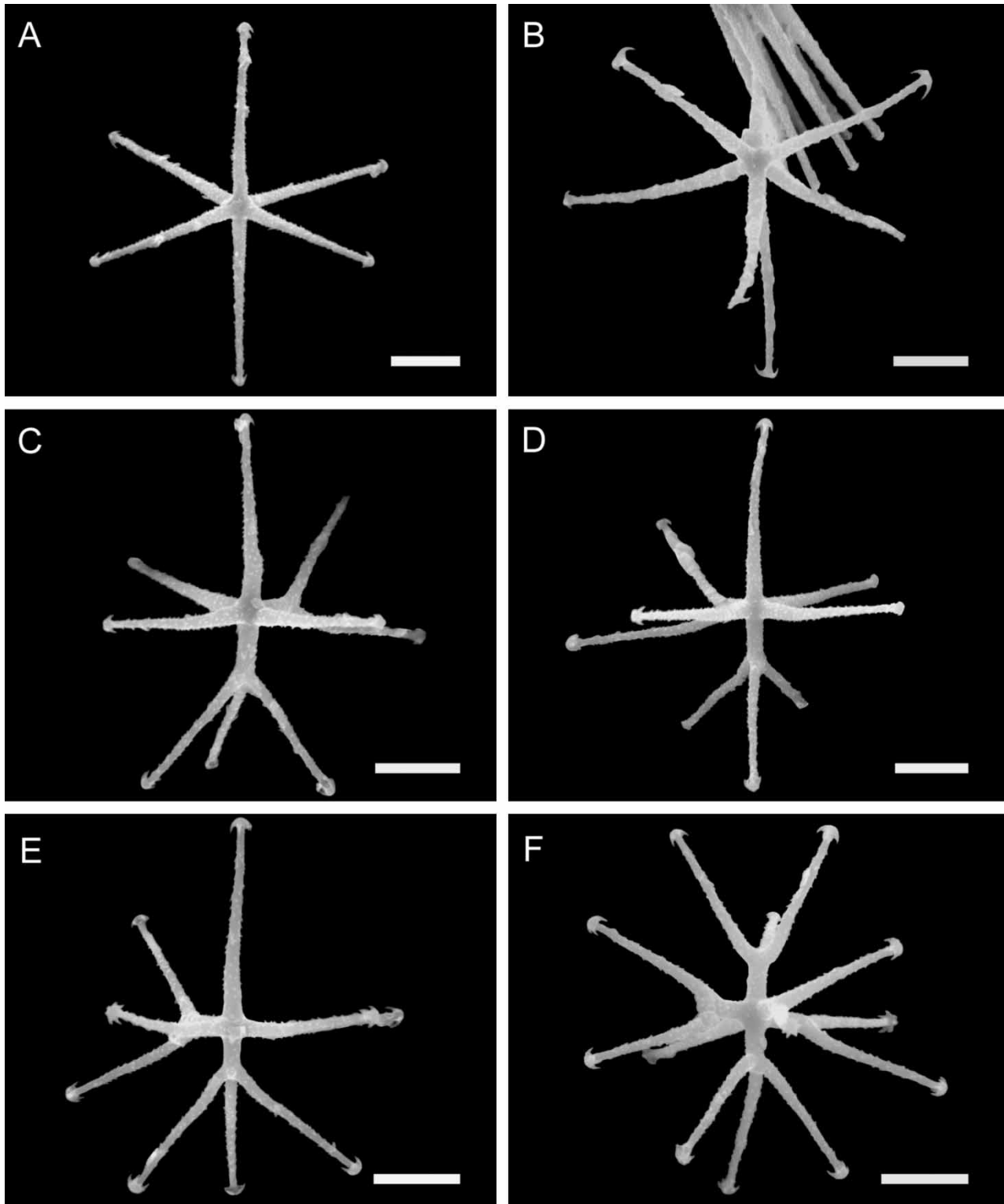


Figure 7. *Chonelasma choanoides* Schulze & Kirkpatrick, 1910. Scanning electron micrographs (A, C–F: MNRJ 7994; B: MNRJ 7319). (A, B) Discohexactin. (C–E) Hemidiscohexasasters. (F) Discohexasaster (scales = 10  $\mu$ m).

*Spicules.* Pentactines of both surfaces are similar, although less abundant on the atrial side. Dermal pentactines (Figure 4C) may be more slender and less acanthose than atrial ones (Figure 4D). The

tangential, as well as the proximal rays of these spicules are long and taper gradually; the latter can be larger. Spines on the rays of the pentactines are smaller towards the tips. Scopules (Figure 4E–J)

Table III. *Chonelasma choanoides* Schulze & Kirkpatrick, 1910. Skeletal data in  $\mu\text{m}$ : means  $\pm$  standard error<sub>n</sub> (smallest–largest).

| Dictional framework                    | MNRJ 7317                                       | MNRJ 7318                           | MNRJ 7319                                      | MNRJ 7994                                      | MNRJ 7995                                       | MNRJ 7999                                       | MNRJ 8009A                                      |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|--|--|---|---|---|
| Epirhysis diameter                     | 1100.0 $\pm$ 192.7 <sub>8</sub><br>(875–1500)   | –                                   | 1460.0 $\pm$ 493.9 <sub>6</sub><br>(1050–2250) | 1487.5 $\pm$ 446.9 <sub>6</sub><br>(1050–2250) | 1117.5 $\pm$ 232.8 <sub>10</sub><br>(725–1425)  | 1137.5 $\pm$ 165.9 <sub>10</sub><br>(825–1400)  | 943.8 $\pm$ 198.1 <sub>8</sub><br>(625–1250)    |
| Epirhysis centre–centre distance width | 2070.0 $\pm$ 290.6 <sub>10</sub><br>(1500–2500) | –                                   | 1775.0 $\pm$ 382.3 <sub>8</sub><br>(1425–2250) | 1787.5 $\pm$ 357.8 <sub>8</sub><br>(1425–2250) | 1725.0 $\pm$ 455.2 <sub>10</sub><br>(1125–2500) | 1440.0 $\pm$ 218.6 <sub>10</sub><br>(1125–1825) | 1667.5 $\pm$ 200.4 <sub>10</sub><br>(1400–2000) |
| Epirhysis septum (margin–margin) width | 840.0 $\pm$ 249.5 <sub>10</sub><br>(500–1325)   | –                                   | 655.0 $\pm$ 255.2 <sub>8</sub><br>(300–900)    | 615.6 $\pm$ 212.1 <sub>8</sub><br>(300–900)    | 800.0 $\pm$ 254.1 <sub>10</sub><br>(375–1150)   | 465.0 $\pm$ 120.9 <sub>10</sub><br>(250–625)    | 712.5 $\pm$ 228.9 <sub>10</sub><br>(450–1125)   |
| Lamella spacing width                  | –<br>(600–1100)                                 | 790.6 $\pm$ 151.2 <sub>8</sub><br>– | –  | –<br>(825–1475)                                | 1135.0 $\pm$ 193.0 <sub>10</sub><br>(1175–1750) | 1410.0 $\pm$ 242.8 <sub>10</sub>                | 1325–1500 <sub>2</sub>                          |

are localized under the surface; dermal and atrial ones are similar, with three to seven slightly divergent terminations bearing microacanthose heads and shafts. Mesohectactines are regular (Figure 5A), with small thorns along the rays. Uncinates (Figure 5B, C) have barb-like thorns along the shaft. Microscleres are oxyhexactins (Figure 5D), hemioxyhexasters (Figure 5E), oxyhexasters (Figure 6A), onychactins (Figure 6B, C), hemionychasters (Figure 6D, E), onychasters (Figure 6F), discohexactins (Figure 7A, B), hemidiscohexasters (Figure 7C–E), discohexasters (Figure 7F), and irregular forms of these microscleres. The ratio of the different microsclere categories varies considerably among specimens, and a clear characterization of the microsclere component can only be achieved under scanning electron microscope due to the minute terminations shown by some of these (Table IV).

*Distribution and ecology.* The species is known from the North Atlantic, Antarctic and the southern Indian Ocean (Crozet Island; Schulze 1887), between 823 and 3397 m (Reiswig & Mehl 1994). This is the first record of the species for the South Atlantic. Specimens MNRJ 7317, 7318, 7994, 7995 and 8009A are attached to the coral *Lophelia pertusa* (Linnaeus, 1758).

*Observations.* *Chonelasma* currently contains four valid species, namely *C. lamella* Schulze, 1886 (New Zealand), *C. doederleini* Schulze, 1886 (Japan), *C. ijimai* Topsent, 1901 (Azores) and *C. choanoides* Schulze & Kirkpatrick, 1910. Among these, *C. lamella* is the closest species to *C. choanoides*, due to a considerable similarity in spicules and the dictyonal framework. The main difference between both species is in the atrial layer – unchannelized in *C. choanoides* and channelized in *C. lamella*. Additionally, pentactines and scopules differ in shape in the two species, as do the dimensions of the microscleres and other less conspicuous traits (Reiswig & Mehl 1994).

The fragmentary state of a considerable portion of the MNRJ material and the occurrence of specimens bearing no free spicules hampered the full identification of some samples of *Chonelasma* collected during REVIZEE (MNRJ 3346 and 3349) and by OCEANPROF (MNRJ 7320, 7321, 7341 and 8022). These specimens have markedly differentiated surfaces – with a clearly discernible quadrangular arrangement on the atrial surface and channelization on the dermal side only. They probably all belong to *C. choanoides*, but the lack of free spicules prevents their full, confident identification.

Table IV. *Chonelasma choanoides* Schulze & Kirkpatrick, 1910. Skeletal data in  $\mu\text{m}$ : means  $\pm$  standard error<sub>n</sub> (smallest–largest).

| Spicules                 | MNRJ 7317                                      | MNRJ 7318                                   | MNRJ 7319                                     | MNRJ 7994                                   | MNRJ 7995                                   | MNRJ 7999                                   | MNRJ 8009A                                  |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Dermal pentactin</b>  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Tangential ray length    | 267.5 $\pm$ 121.6 <sub>6</sub><br>(145–420)    | 258.8 $\pm$ 68.2 <sub>4</sub><br>(185–350)  | 266.9 $\pm$ 90.0 <sub>8</sub><br>(155–405)    | 323.9 $\pm$ 72.0 <sub>14</sub><br>(205–480) | 280.0 $\pm$ 48.7 <sub>6</sub><br>(230–340)  | 286.4 $\pm$ 54.6 <sub>25</sub><br>(155–425) | 263.8 $\pm$ 62.6 <sub>25</sub><br>(160–370) |
| Tangential ray width     | 36.5 $\pm$ 19.8 <sub>5</sub><br>(15–60)        | 17.5 $\pm$ 10.1 <sub>4</sub><br>(15–20)     | 28.1 $\pm$ 10.3 <sub>9</sub><br>(18–48)       | 23.0 $\pm$ 7.3 <sub>10</sub><br>(13–38)     | 18.8 $\pm$ 3.5 <sub>6</sub><br>(15–23)      | 31.5 $\pm$ 7.4 <sub>10</sub><br>(20–43)     | 22.3 $\pm$ 6.4 <sub>10</sub><br>(13–33)     |
| Proximal ray length      | 417.0 $\pm$ 280.6 <sub>5</sub><br>(165–745)    | 211.7 $\pm$ 40.4 <sub>3</sub><br>(165–235)  | 330.0 $\pm$ 115.5 <sub>6</sub><br>(245–550)   | 381.7 $\pm$ 219.6 <sub>6</sub><br>(165–710) | 318.0 $\pm$ 69.8 <sub>5</sub><br>(240–400)  | 195–395 <sub>2</sub>                        | 332.0 $\pm$ 95.9 <sub>23</sub><br>(150–540) |
| Proximal ray width       | 31.0 $\pm$ 18.7 <sub>5</sub><br>(13–55)        | 17.5 $\pm$ 5.0 <sub>3</sub><br>(13–23)      | 22.9 $\pm$ 5.8 <sub>6</sub><br>(18–33)        | 22.5 $\pm$ 4.9 <sub>6</sub><br>(10–23)      | 13.5 $\pm$ 1.4 <sub>5</sub><br>(13–15)      | 21.7 $\pm$ 8.2 <sub>6</sub><br>(15–38)      | 18.8 $\pm$ 8.8 <sub>10</sub><br>(10–40)     |
| Mesohexactine ray length | 139.6 $\pm$ 27.5 <sub>6</sub><br>(105–173)     | 143.6 $\pm$ 35.6 <sub>25</sub><br>(93–228)  | 181.3 $\pm$ 72.9 <sub>8</sub><br>(95–285)     | 110.3 $\pm$ 39.0 <sub>25</sub><br>(45–198)  | 132.5 $\pm$ 36.8 <sub>25</sub><br>(80–218)  | 114.3 $\pm$ 30.2 <sub>25</sub><br>(50–173)  | 122.4 $\pm$ 25.4 <sub>25</sub><br>(80–193)  |
| Ray width                | 6.0 $\pm$ 1.4 <sub>5</sub><br>(5–8)            | 6.3 $\pm$ 1.8 <sub>10</sub><br>(5–10)       | 11.3 $\pm$ 4.4 <sub>8</sub><br>(5–18)         | 7.0 $\pm$ 2.8 <sub>10</sub><br>(5–13)       | 7.0 $\pm$ 4.2 <sub>10</sub><br>(3–18)       | 5.8 $\pm$ 1.7 <sub>10</sub><br>(5–10)       | 6.8 $\pm$ 2.1 <sub>10</sub><br>(5–10)       |
| <b>Microscleres</b>      |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Oxyhexaster diameter     | 71.5 $\pm$ 9.6 <sub>25</sub><br>(53–90)        | 75.9 $\pm$ 13.0 <sub>25</sub><br>(50–98)    | 74.8 $\pm$ 14.6 <sub>25</sub><br>(58–108)     | 50–53 <sub>2</sub>                          | 46.5 $\pm$ 4.9 <sub>5</sub><br>(40–53)      | 76.1 $\pm$ 21.0 <sub>25</sub><br>(43–138)   | 73.8 $\pm$ 12.5 <sub>25</sub><br>(53–98)    |
| Discohexaster diameter   | 59.9 $\pm$ 9.5 <sub>25</sub><br>(43–75)        | 60.6 $\pm$ 9.2 <sub>25</sub><br>(48–78)     | 53.3 $\pm$ 10.0 <sub>25</sub><br>(38–73)      | 48.1 $\pm$ 9.6 <sub>25</sub><br>(35–73)     | 45.2 $\pm$ 5.8 <sub>25</sub><br>(35–63)     | 56.1 $\pm$ 9.5 <sub>25</sub><br>(40–78)     | 56.9 $\pm$ 3.8 <sub>4</sub><br>(53–60)      |
| Onychexaster diameter    | 62.6 $\pm$ 12.3 <sub>25</sub><br>(35–88)       | 68.1 $\pm$ 10.9 <sub>25</sub><br>(43–88)    | 59.0 $\pm$ 9.7 <sub>25</sub><br>(35–75)       | 43 <sub>1</sub>                             | 50.2 $\pm$ 8.4 <sub>21</sub><br>(40–70)     | 63.0 $\pm$ 10.0 <sub>25</sub><br>(48–83)    | 65.1 $\pm$ 11.0 <sub>25</sub><br>(48–90)    |
| Scopule length (total)   | 279.6 $\pm$ 144.4 <sub>25</sub><br>(150–585)   | 188.4 $\pm$ 30.4 <sub>25</sub><br>(130–285) | 290.6 $\pm$ 214.5 <sub>25</sub><br>(140–1015) | 147.8 $\pm$ 13.2 <sub>25</sub><br>(120–175) | 154.8 $\pm$ 14.3 <sub>25</sub><br>(125–185) | 150.0 $\pm$ 10.0 <sub>6</sub><br>(135–165)  | 184.6 $\pm$ 70.9 <sub>25</sub><br>(120–445) |
| Length (head)            | 50.5 $\pm$ 17.5 <sub>25</sub><br>(28–93)       | 38.3 $\pm$ 5.3 <sub>25</sub><br>(28–53)     | 46.7 $\pm$ 16.7 <sub>25</sub><br>(30–80)      | 34.3 $\pm$ 3.3 <sub>25</sub><br>(28–40)     | 33.2 $\pm$ 2.8 <sub>25</sub><br>(28–38)     | 34.6 $\pm$ 1.9 <sub>6</sub><br>(33–38)      | 34.0 $\pm$ 7.8 <sub>25</sub><br>(28–55)     |
| Width (head)             | 20.1 $\pm$ 8.3 <sub>25</sub><br>(10–40)        | 16.4 $\pm$ 2.3 <sub>25</sub><br>(13–20)     | 18.6 $\pm$ 6.8 <sub>25</sub><br>(13–38)       | 12.5 $\pm$ 1.9 <sub>25</sub><br>(10–18)     | 13.4 $\pm$ 1.9 <sub>25</sub><br>(10–18)     | 14.6 $\pm$ 1.0 <sub>6</sub><br>(13–15)      | 13.4 $\pm$ 2.3 <sub>25</sub><br>(10–20)     |
| Uncinate length          | 1935.0 $\pm$ 816.2 <sub>5</sub><br>(1175–3300) | 1325–2250 <sub>2</sub>                      | 2212.5 $\pm$ 925 <sub>4</sub><br>(1450–3550)  | 2717 <sub>1</sub>                           | –   | 1125 <sub>1</sub>                           | –   |
| Width                    | 14.5 $\pm$ 2.8 <sub>10</sub><br>(10–20)        | 14.3 $\pm$ 3.3 <sub>10</sub><br>(10–20)     | 16.0 $\pm$ 2.1 <sub>10</sub><br>(13–18)       | 19.0 $\pm$ 2.9 <sub>10</sub><br>(15–23)     | 15.8 $\pm$ 1.7 <sub>10</sub><br>(13–18)     | 14.8 $\pm$ 1.8 <sub>10</sub><br>(13–18)     | 14.3 $\pm$ 2.9 <sub>10</sub><br>(10–18)     |

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