

## ***Thermopalia taraxaca* Pugh, 1983**

"Galapagos dandelion"

Cnidaria, Hydrozoa, Siphonophora, Physonectae, Rhodaliidae

Philip R. Pugh

**Geographical distribution:** Galapagos Spreading Center and East Pacific Rise.

**Size:** Height of main body up to 40 mm.

**Diagnosis:** Ball-like structure, with an apical, smooth-walled float (pneumatophore), pinkish-orange in colour. Immediately below this is a corona of flimsy, swimming bells; but these are only apparent if the animal is actively swimming. The main body consists of a mass of orange-coloured feeding polyps (gastrozooids), together with other structures. The specific characteristics are rather esoteric, and include a smooth-walled aurophore;

cormidia attached directly to the main body of the corm; and the absence of gonopalpons.

**Ecology:** The animals are very obvious structures as they float a few centimeters above the substrate, and are attached, like tethered hot-air balloons, by means of numerous lines (tentacles). They occur toward the periphery of thermal fields of hydrothermal vents.

### Reference

Pugh, P.R. *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. Lond.* **301**(1105), 165-300 (1983).

