

THE FIRST INSHORE RECORD OF *APOLEMIA UVARIA* (LESUEUR) (COELENTERATA: SIPHONOPHORA) TOGETHER WITH SOME STRANDINGS OF FAUNA ON THE SW IRISH COAST, 1985

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Specimens of the siphonophore *Apoemia uvaria* (Lesueur) were found by the author at the sea surface near the southern side of Bantry Bay (V9045) on 25 November 1985. Four helical colonies of approximately 40cm length were seen. Mr John Minahane, a fisherman, mentioned that these had been very numerous during mid-October.

Colonial siphonophores, possibly this species, of up to 6m length but more usually 1-2m were commonly seen from off the Old Head of Kinsale, Co Cork, to Caherdaniel, Co Kerry, during July and August (T. Southgate pers. comm.). He first noticed these during mid-June and fragmented colonies were observed into October. They were found to depths of 40m, the maximum depth dived to, but in some areas were very common at the surface where they formed drifts. Dermal irritation was experienced on contact. In Dunmanus Bay on 27 October 1985, two biologists, Pat Whelan and Ms Fionnuala Walsh, noticed many hundreds of long chain siphonophores in unusually clear water. Their observations were made North of Carbery Island (V8436) and off Farnamannagh Bay (V8337). These siphonophores extended in a spiral and many exceeded 3m in length. Captured sections were made up of transparent grape-like lumps and were capable of inflicting a mild sting. These observations may also refer to *A. uvaria*.

Kirkpatrick and Pugh (1985) refer to *A. uvaria* as being well known from the Mediterranean Sea; they also described it as being widely distributed offshore around the British Isles from the Celtic Sea and the SW shelf edge to the northern part of the North Sea. The species can be found in the top 100m of water but they knew of no records of its presence in shallow or less shallow waters. The present record is the only known inshore account and this species may now be added to the checklist of Siphonophora from Irish waters (Jeal and West 1970). In addition to finding *A. uvaria*, a number of other unusual or less frequent fauna were found stranded during 1985. At the beginning of October at high water on the western shoreline of Inch Beach, Co Kerry (V9865) 247 live, recently stranded, *Verella verella* (L.) were found. It is likely that many more were present as some of those counted were buried in drifts of *Zostera noltii* Hornem. Also present were *Sepia elegans* D'Orbigny, *Phoronima sedentaria* (Forsskal) and *Lepas anatifera* (L.). All *Verella* and *P. sedentaria* were confined to about 1km of shoreline approximately mid-way along Inch beach. Strandings of 11 live *Verella* were noticed on Owenahinch strand (W3035) on 10 October 1985. Earlier in the year *Verella verella* was observed on 17 July 1985 at Inchidoney Strand (W4038) (J.M.C. Holmes pers. comm.).

At the beginning of October there were also sightings and strandings of the oceanic fish *Scorpaenopsis saurus* (Walbaum) in nearby Dingle Harbour (Q0144). Details of the strandings of *Phoronima sedentaria* are given by Minchin and Holmes (in press).

At the end of August 1985 a cold upwelling of about 11°C water was observed in the vicinity of the coast from Roaring Water Bay to Bantry Bay (Roden 1986), with warmer water present offshore. The extent of the observations of siphonophores and various other offshore forms suggest that the non-coastal water mass extended at various times over the

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summer and autumn from the Old Head of Kinsale to Dingle Bay. The presence of *A. uvaria* and *P. sedentaria*, both southern NE Atlantic species, suggests that the mass may have originated from south of Ireland.

Although this is the first inshore record of *A. uvaria*, a previous sighting, possibly this species, was made by the author during August 1980 at the Limeburner and Frenchmans rock (C1250 and C1146 respectively), off the north Irish coast. Many hundreds of siphonophore colonies were seen, some estimated as exceeding 8m in length and similar to *A. uvaria*, together with a further small siphonophore sp. and a *Cyclosalpa* sp.

A section of a siphonophore of *A. uvaria* has been lodged in the National Museum of Ireland. NMI 141.1985.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Mr Kevin Flannery of Dingle, Co Kerry, for the information on the *Scorpaenopsis* stranding, and Mr John Minahane, Dr Terence Southgate, Mr Pat Whelan and Ms Fionnuala Walsh for their observations of siphonophores. Mr Pat Whelan kindly identified the *Zostera* and Mr Mark Holmes of the National Museum of Ireland the *Apoemia*.

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