

Juvenile holothurian observed at La Réunion (Indian Ocean)

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Following the questionnaire published by Shiell (2004a), a number of reports on juvenile observations have been collated by Shiell (2004b) and James (2005). We report here on a recent observation, with photos (Fig. 1), of an unidentified stichopodid species from La Réunion fringing reef.

Species observed: Undetermined species of the family Stichopodidae

Number of individuals observed: 1

Approximate size: 2.5 cm

Location: Outer reef flat St Gilles / La Saline (La Réunion)

Habitat: In sand, near surf, under dead coral

Time of day: 11 am

Date: 21-09-2014

Were adults present within the same habitat or nearby? A few small *Stichopus chloronotus* and *Holothuria pervicax*

The photos taken *in situ* show the quadrangular shape and the transparent tegument, with tiny white spots. The bivium has numerous large white tipped papillae with a black circle at the base (Fig. 1A). The trivium has three rows of podia (Fig. 1B). No disaggregation of the tegument was observed during the manipulation, unlike that noted for *Stichopus chloronotus*, which reproduces sexually during the warm season (Conand et al. 2002). The other stichopodids present in La Réunion are *S. herrmanni*, *S. monotuberculatus* and *Thelenota ananas* (Conand et al. 2010), whose juveniles look different (Trentin 2011). Other observations remain necessary on this little known but important stage in the holothurian life history.

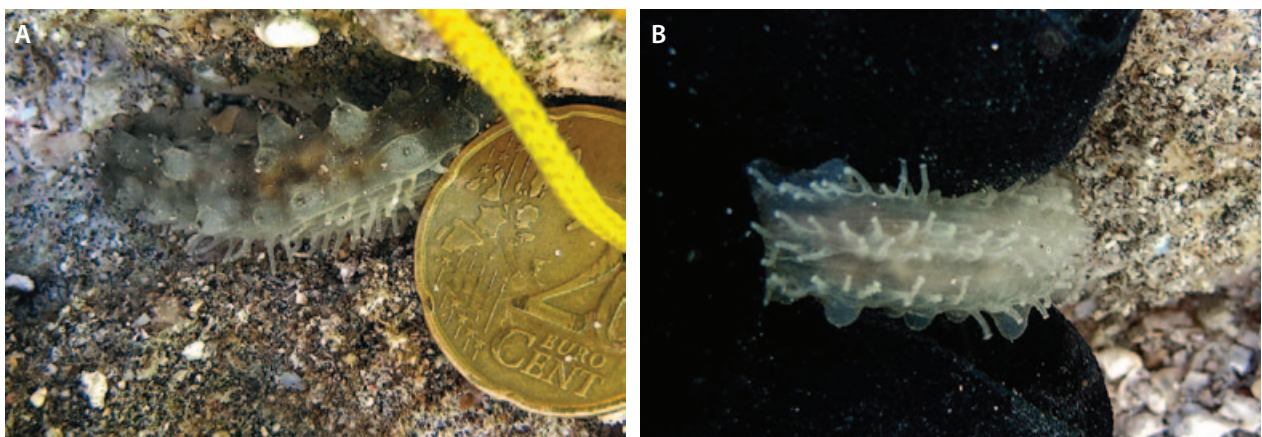


Figure 1. Juvenile stichopodid observed in La Réunion. A) Bivium; B) Trivium (Images: P. Bourjon).

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