

nudibranch NEWS 2:5

Feature Creature

? *Discodoris. sp (green)*



fig.1. The colour is inaccurate in this image. There is so much red. Fig. 2 is more accurate.

An undescribed species first sighted (by myself) at Catherine Hill Bay, south of Newcastle, NSW, Australia and again at Port Stephens, NSW.

Maximum length appears to be 50 - 60mm. It is found in association with a greenish coloured encrusting sponge on rocky substrates. The animal blends beautifully with the sponge and it is usually the presence of the yellow egg mass that draws ones attention. From the spawn shape and size it is reasonable to assume this species is a direct developer.

The mantle is covered in small pustules which appear to be a mimic of the sponge. The gill are feathery and large. Careful observation is required to locate this species, it blends perfectly with its prey.

References:
Personal observation of the editor.

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Editor's Notes...

The "Australasian" part of the newsletters title has been dropped. With so much international input the old name was becoming limiting and confusing. Some small layout changes have also been made. As always, our comments would be appreciated.

Richard Willan and Julie Marshall's eagerly awaited new book, "**Nudibranchs of Heron Island, The Great Barrier Reef**" has been released. A review will appear in an upcoming issue. The book contains 280 pages with 35 colour plates (8 images to a plate). 262 species are covered in detail. Price is reportedly \$60US.

What is in a name? On page 19 of this issue is an article on *Phidiana* (or is it *Caloria*) *indica*. This is one of the many cases where differing views prevail. The name *Phidiana* has been used in the article as it is the most current name published, Rudman, 1999 (The Sea Slug Forum). It is noted that reference is made to the Australian Museum's site by current researchers. That protocol is continued here.

Neil Miller of **Diveoz Web Services** and I have merged our sites to offer a fast, clean and hopefully more user friendly resource. The nudibranch site is now at <http://www.diveoz.com.au>. Links from the old pages will redirect visitors to the new site to avoid any inconvenience. Thanks to Wes Thorrson, Bob Bolland, Richard Willan and Steve Long for offering their advice and comments and to Neil for making the move possible and relatively smooth and painless. Your comments on the site would be appreciated.



This image shows how well camouflaged our green dorid can be. Note the gills in the bottom left of the image. The egg mass gave away this particular animals location. The colour in this image is more accurate than in fig. 1.

Port Stephens Australia

David and Leanne Atkinson, long time "Bay" divers contributed these images of new sightings. Both were found at Halifax Park, the deepest of the popular dive sites. Port Stephens is a popular area to dive and has a wide variety of nudibranch species. A species list can be found at <http://www.diveoz.com.au> and is updated regularly.

1. *Noumea varians* (Pease, 1871)

A beautiful Indo-West Pacific species and this sighting is probably towards the end of its range down the Australian east coast.

N. varians is part of the *Noumea purpurea* colour group that includes
Durvilledoris pusilla
Noumea norba
Pectenodoris trilineata
Durvilledoris similaris
Hypselodoris maculosa
Durvilledoris lemniscata
Noumea alboannulata
Chromodoris? sp. 6
Noumea purpurea

N. varians is known from Northern Australia, Tahiti, Guam, Hawaii, Japan, Christmas Island and the Indoensian Archipelago.

This group has been compared on the Australian Museum's **Sea Slug Forum** in some detail.



2. *Noumea laboutei* Rudman, 1986

Originally described from New Caledonia and named in honour of P. Laboute.

The mantle is bright yellow and the rhinophores and gills are described as wine red. The southern populations, especially those found around Coffs Harbour Nth NSW, Australia have watery pink gills. The animal in the picture may have damaged gills.

Distributed from Seychelles to Malaysia and New Caledonia. Willan extends the range to include Darwin and Nth NSW.

David and Leanne found this specimen at 20m, Halifax Park in late December. This extends the known range further south.

Noumea laboutei is part of a group of yellow *Noumea* which includes: *Noumea flava*, *Noumea crocea*, *Noumea sulphurea*, *Noumea closei*, and the yellow form of *Noumea haliclona*.

Phidiana indica (Bergh, 1896)

Behrens, Gosliner and Ono refer to this animal as **Caloria indica** in their publications. Various authors place this animal in the genera *Learchis*, *Caloria*, *Hervia* and *Facelina*.

This large distinctive aeolid can grow to 50 mm. Distribution range is from Africa to Hawaii and is one of the more commonly sighted Indo-Pacific aeolids. It is reportedly found on relatively shallow reefs or in rock pools throughout its range feeding on the hydroids; *Salocia tetracythara*, *Eudendrium sp.* and *Pennaria disticha*. It is active during the day and seems to prefer clean water situations.

The apricot-red body is elongate, fairly high and narrow with this yellow edging on the anterior of the foot. The posterior tip is also yellow. The rhinophores are shorter than the oral tentacles and gradually taper to a blunt point. The base is translucent in colour, above which is a broad orange band, then white. The distal third of the rhinophore is yellow.

The head is orange with two white lines and the long oral tentacles (see fig.2) are coloured orange with a white line then white at the base, then a at the base band and the distal half yellow.

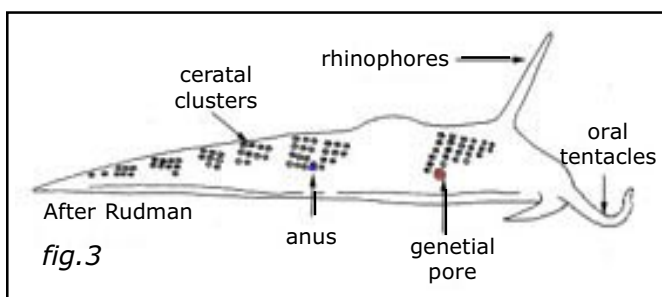
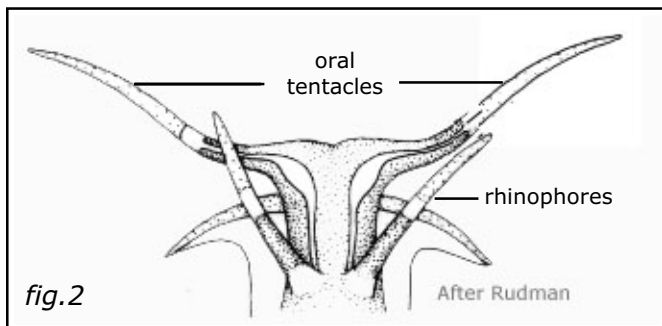
The cerata are mostly shorter than the rhinophores and are arranged in six distinct clusters with a few single cerata at the posterior end. The outer cerata are the smallest. The basal third is orange, then dark blue and the tips are yellow. The anus is in the second cluster of cerata, between the third and fourth rows on the right side.

Synonyms:

Learchis indica
Bergh, 1896
Learchis howensis
Burn, 1966



fig.1. This specimen was photographed by **nerida wilson** off the Sunshine Coast (sth Qld Australia) ©1999 Nerida Wilson



References:

Willan and Coleman. 1984. *Nudibranchs of Australasia*
Gosliner. 1984. *Nudibranchs of Southern Africa*
Gosliner, Behrens & Williams. 1996 *Coral Reef Animals of the Indo-Pacific*
Rudman, W.B. (1980) *Aeolid opisthobranch molluscs (Glaucidae) from the Indian Ocean and the south-west Pacific. Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society* 68: 139-172.

Dave Behrens' Book Review

Tropical Pacific Invertebrates –A Field Guide to the Marine Invertebrates Occurring on Tropical Pacific Coral Reefs, Seagrass Beds and Mangroves

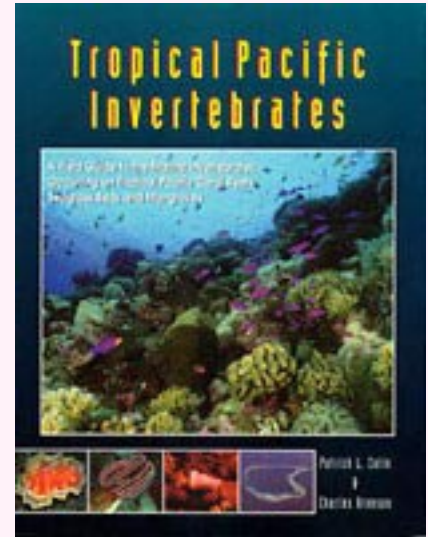
1995. Patrick L. Colin & Charles Arneson

I was aware of the quality and intent of Tropical Pacific Invertebrates long before the book was published, as Pat and Charlie asked the authors of **Coral Reef Animals of the Indo-Pacific** to team with them on a joint effort. While we decided to publish our two books separately, our decision was never because we questioned the quality of their work or the content they presented.

Tropical Pacific Invertebrates is a fantastic and beautiful collection of the most common species of reef invertebrates from the islands known as Micronesia. It has one of the broadest coverage of sponges and tunicates of any book available today.

From an opisthobranch standpoint, it includes photographs and information of some very important species, and some that were available nowhere else when this great book was published. These include the more recently described *Chromodoris diana* (sp. # 852 & 856), *Chromodoris michaeli* (sp # 855), *Nembrotha chamberlaini* (sp. # 890) and *Notodoris serenae* (sp # 896).

Suffering only a few mis-identifications (a problem symptomatic to nearly every book out today), I highly recommend it for its beautiful photos and comprehensive coverage.



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Ercolania sp.

Robert Burn in a recent conversation noted that *Stelliger fuscata* described in issue 2:1 page 4 is actually *Ercolania sp.* To quote Mollusca. A Southern Synthesis – "Another black *Ercolania* occurs on the salt marches surrounding Moreton Bay, southern Queensland, and has been incorrectly identified as the North American east coast *E. fuscata* (Thompson 1973b; Gascoigne 1978)".



fig.1 *Stelliger fuscata* is in fact an undescribed species
Ercolania sp.

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Mediterranean nudibranchs

We have no Mediterranean nudibranchs, I will let Miquel explain. "Excuse me for not having sent you my monthly Mediterranean nudibranchs article but I have a good excuse: Eulàli, (my wife) and I have a newborn baby at home. Her name is Núria and she weighed 3 Kg. and was born on January 1st, 2000".

Congratulations Miquel and Eulàli and best wishes.

Shireen Fahey and Terry Gosliner have published a new paper:
Preliminary Phylogeny of Halgerda (Nudibranchia: Halgerdidae) from the tropical Indo-Pacific, with descriptions of Three New Species. Proceedings of the California Academy of Sciences Vol.51, no.11 pp.425-448. Nov. 23,1999.

The new species are:
Halgerda stricklandi,
Halgerda basalusia,
Halgerda diaphana

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