miquel pontes

Tritonia nilsodhneri

This dendronotacean nudibranch was described by Marcus Ev. in 1983. The etymology of the gender name *Tritonia* suggests one of the names of Minerva while the species name *Nilsodhneri* is dedicated to Nils Odhner, (1884-1973), a molluscs specialist at the Swedish Museum of Natural History.

This is a thin and elongated nudibranch that reaches lengths of 20 to 35mm. The colour of the body is variable as it tends to imitate the colour of the gorgonians on which it lives It feeds on the gorgonian polyps.

In the Western Mediterranean it is commonly found over the white gorgonian *Eunicella singularis*, where it wraps itself like a ring around the gorgonian branch and is coloured white or light grey.

The front veil has 6 digitiform processes, the outer ones longer than the rest. The white rhinophores grow from their high, cylindrical sheaths. There are 5 to 7 pairs of ramified dorsal appendixes mimicing the polyps of the gorgonian

The egg masses, are the same colour as the nudibranch and are laid in a very characteristic spiral surrounding the gorgonian branch. In fact, finding an egg mass is the easiest way to find the animal.

Because of its relatively small size and cryptic colouration, it can be a difficult to find. It shares its range with that of the gorgonians, usually at depths ranging from 5 to 25 meters.

Readers can find more interesting information and pictures of this nudibranch at Erwin Köhler's MedSlugs **(http://www.medslugs.de/E/Mediterranean/Tritonia_nilsodhneri.htm), at**

Bernard Picton's "Nudibranchs of the British Isles**" (http://www.pictonb.freeserve.co.uk/nudibranchs/trinil.html) and at**

Bill Rudman's Seaslug Forum at the Australian Museum Online **(http://www.seaslugforum.net/tritnils.htm)**