

Reanalysis of the southernmost distribution of *Erosaria acicularis* (Caenogastropoda, Cypraeidae) in Brazil.

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Abstract

The southernmost range of the geographic distribution of *Erosaria acicularis* (Caenogastropoda, Cypraeidae) is extended from north coast of Rio de Janeiro state to the north coast of São Paulo state. This observation is based on living specimen found in Ilha Bela municipality.

Key words: *Erosaria acicularis*, geographic distribution, Brazil, Cypraeidae.

Resumo

O limite sul da distribuição geográfica de *Erosaria acicularis* (Caenogastropoda, Cypraeidae) é estendido da costa norte do Estado do Rio de Janeiro para a costa norte do Estado de São Paulo. Esta observação é baseada em espécime vivo encontrado no município de Ilha Bela.

Palavras-chave: *Erosaria acicularis*, distribuição geográfica, Brasil, Cypraeidae.

Introduction

A revision of the western Atlantic cypraeideans has been recently published (Simone 2004), bringing some accurateness to the knowledge on the species of that region, particularly from Brazilian coast. Using this paper as scenario, next step is to resolve some small points that remained poorly understood, one of them is reported following.

There are uncertainties in the southernmost distribution of the most common Brazilian cowry *Erosaria acicularis* (Gmelin, 1791). The species is frequent at the Caribbean Sea and also at northeast coast of Brazil (Oliveira 1992; Rios 1994; Absalão et al 2006) and Oceanic Islands (Gomes et al. 2006). However, sometimes shells of this species are found in the southeast Brazilian coast, more specifically at the coast of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. As there is the possibility of shell transportation from north to south, and also artificial antropoc transportation, the finding of a living specimen could be imperative for confirming the species in that geographical area.

The antropoc transportation is because of the common usage of *Erosaria acicularis* in religious rituals, mainly in Candomblé and Umbanda, which also include other foreigner cowries, such as *Monetaria moneta* (Linné, 1758) and *M. annulus* (Linné, 1758) (Coltro 2004). Empty shells, as well as shells with hermit crab, of these species are sometimes found along the seashore after rituals (personal observations).

Results

In the current literature, little attention has been done to the southernmost range of the *Erosaria acicularis* distribution, as most papers only refers to "West Indies" or "Brazil" (Burgess 1970; Abbot 1974). Rios (1994) is the single author referring the southernmost occurrence of the species as São Paulo. However, according to the author (Rios, personal communication) no deep analysis on the matter was performed, and neither secure report of living specimens collected in São Paulo has been established. Up to date, the southernmost collected living specimen came from Búzios, north coast of Rio de Janeiro (MZSP 46.212, see below), that lot based the report as being Rio de Janeiro the south range of the species in Simone (2004).

In the collection of the Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paulo (MZSP), that possesses voucher material of hundreds of expeditions, a search revealed four lots collected at São Paulo coast, but all them having empty shells (see material examined below).

During a recent excursion done by the malacological team of the MZSP, finally a living specimen of *Erosaria acicularis* was collected, confirming the occurrence of the species in the north coast of the São Paulo. The place of collect was the São Sebastião channel, in the Ilha Bela municipality. The specimen (Figs. 1-3) was thoughtful transported

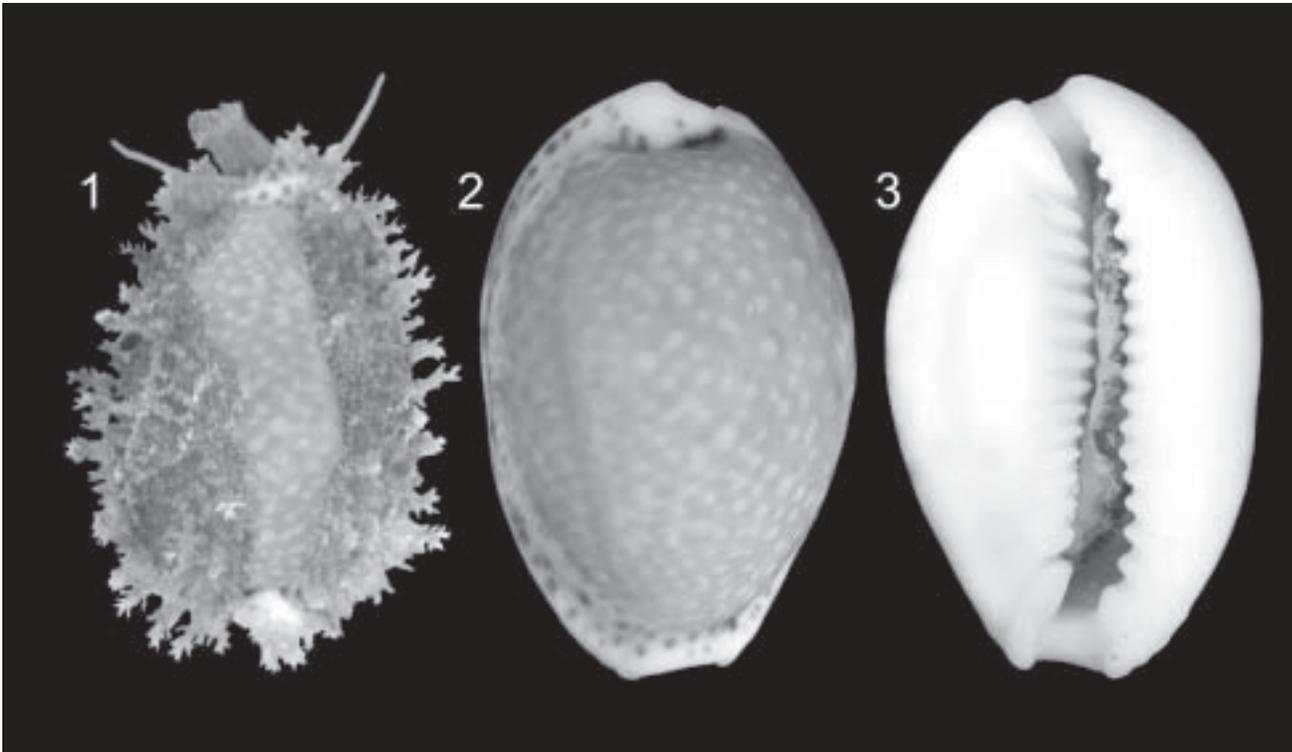


Fig. 1- *Erosaria acicularis* living collected at São Paulo coast, MZSP 41631. 1, Active specimen crawling; 2 – 3. Shell, frontal and dorsal views. Whole size = 26 mm.

to the laboratory, in such photos of its interesting mantle papillae were taken (Fig. 1).

As conclusion is the extension to the north coast of São Paulo State as the southernmost occurrence of *Erosaria acicularis*.

Material examined (beyond those reported in Simone, 2004: 48): BRAZIL. **Rio de Janeiro**; Búzios, Ossos beach, MZSP 46212, 1 living collected specimen (J.R.L. Simone col., 10/i/1985). **São Paulo**; Ilha Bela, Ilha das Cabras, 23°49'50.0"S 45°23'34.3"W, 3 m depth, MZSP 41631, 1 preserved @& (E.P. Gonçalves col. 07/v/2004); São Sebastião, MZSP 38957, 1 shell (Günther col., ix/1906), Enseada Beach, MZSP 46169. 3 shells (V.C. Machline col., 31/vi/1983); Santos, off Lage de Santos, 20-30 m depth, MZSP 38956, 1 shell (R.V. "Emilia" col., sta. 17; 23.iii.1961).

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