

Rhynchozoon taoraensis new species
Plate 68C-D

Type material Holotype: SBMNH 365821, 408-84.

Description Colony unilaminar. Autozooids irregularly polygonal (0.30–0.40 x 0.20–0.30 mm). Frontal shield convex, developing rounded tubercles in ontogeny, numerous, often irregularly spaced, deep-set marginal pores. Primary orifice oval, wider than long (ca 0.09 x 0.08 mm), distal denticulations stout, sinus shallow, bowl-shaped, occupying about one third its width, delimited by two small, lateral, distally-pointing projections, condyles large, triangular, distofrontally directed. No oral spines. Suboral avicularium in most autozooids, incorporated into peristome, rostrum triangular, hooked distally, its proximal portion continuous with short, uncinete process projecting into peristome lumen, directed frontolaterally. Peristome most developed proximally, almost obscuring orifice, a short mucro developed on top of avicularium contributing to it. With ontogenetic thickening primary orifice becomes immersed, a shallow, asymmetrical pseudosinus produced proximally. Single frontal avicularia in minority of autozooids, located proximomedially, directed laterally or proximolaterally, rostrum triangular, pointed distally, recumbent on frontal shield, rostral palate minimal, opesia triangular with denticulate inner border, mandible acute, triangular, crossbar thick, complete. Ovicell not observed.

Etymology Named for the type locality, Taora Passage between Choiseul and Vealaviru.

Remarks *Rhynchozoon taoraensis* is characterised by its oval orifice, wider than long, its shallow bowl-shaped sinus, delimited by small, lateral projections and large, triangular condyles, distofrontally directed. The small frontal avicularia, which are similar in shape to others described here, are unique in having an opesia with denticulate borders.

Distribution *Rhynchozoon taoraensis* is only known from a single colony from the Solomon Islands. It was found from Taora Passage between Choiseul and Vealaviru.

