

METROPERIELLA MONTFERRANDII (AUDOUIN)
(Fig. 15F)

Flustra montferrandii Audouin, 1826: 240.

Codonellina montferrandii: Harmer, 1957: 1049, pl. 69, figs 25, 26, 30 (cum syn.); Gordon, 1984: 77, pl. 26A.

Material examined

NHM 1998.8.4.73, NHM 1999.4.11.58,59, Port Vila Harbour, Efate, 4–5 m; NHM 1999.4.11.60,61, Torres Straits.

Description

Colony encrusting, forming small unilaminar patches; pale pink when dried. Autozooids irregularly polygonal, convex, distinct, separated by grooves (0.60–0.70 × 0.35–0.45 mm). Primary orifice oval, longer than wide; broad, deep anter separated from shallow poster by small triangular condyles. Frontal shield evenly perforated by numerous small pores. No oral spines. A single, median adventitious avicularium, acute rostrum raised slightly, directed proximally or obliquely laterally. Ovicell prominent with thin-walled calcification and scattered pores of various sizes.

Remarks

This species has no type material and the plate figure of Savigny [1817] in Audouin (1826) is somewhat idealized. It has been accorded an almost global distribution in warm–temperate to tropical waters except the Atlantic Ocean. Re-examination of all material attributed to *M. montferrandii*, with the designation of a neotype specimen from the Egyptian Red Sea, would stabilize the species and also aid in clarifying the debate over possible conspecificity with *M. lepralioides* (see Gordon, 1984, 1994 for discussion).

The small fragments of material from Port Vila Harbour, Vanuatu, differ from Red Sea specimens in having a shorter, wider orifice and a longer, more acute suboral avicularium. Although certain Red Sea specimens have larger, proximally pointing, spatulate frontal avicularia in place of the more normal median avicularia, these were not seen in the Vanuatu material but were present in specimens from the Torres Strait.

