

*Margaretta gracilior* (Ortmann, 1892). Tilbrook, 2006, p. 234, pl.51D

**Margaretta gracilior** (Ortmann, 1892)  
Plate 51D

*Tubucellaria gracilior* Ortmann, 1892: 669, text-fig.

*Margaretta gracilior*: Harmer, 1957: 835, pl. 55, figs 23-28 (cum. syn.); Hayward, 1988: 328, pl. 11b; Gordon, 1989b: 456, figs 16-17.

**Material examined** SBMNH 365668-669, **403-84**; SBMNH 365670, **406-84**; SBMNH 365671, **407-84**; SBMNH 365672, **409-84**; SBMNH 365673, **410-84**; SBMNH 365674, **411-84**; NHM 1882.10.18.8-10, Marie Louise Island, Amirante Islands, NE of Madagascar; NHM 1931.12.30.134,135, "Albatross" Station 5147, off Sulade Island, Sulu Archipelago, Philippines, 38 m; NHM 1953.7.10.1, Mauritius; NHM 1984.12.22.11, Farquhar Atoll, Indian Ocean, 11°S, Thornely Coll.; NHM 1984.12.22.12 (15.E), Ghardaqa (Hurghada), Red Sea; NHM 1984.12.22.13 (57.G), "Siboga" Station 80, Borneo Bank, Strait of Makassar, 40-50 m; NHM 1984.12.22.14 (67.E), "Siboga" Station 99, N. Ubian, Sulu Archipelago, 16-23 m; NHM 1984.12.22.15 (459.E), "Siboga" Station 80, Borneo Bank, Strait of Makassar, 0-34 m; NHM 1984.12.22.16 (396.C), "Siboga" Station 162, off Loslos Island, N. end of New Guinea, 18 m.

**Description** Internodes narrow (ca 0.50 mm), straight or curving, becoming thickened in ontogeny, 5–6 mm long. Each node and basis rami consists of a single tube, originating proximal side of autozooidal peristome, which closes over, from suture of frontal and peristomial calcification. Autozooids in whorls of two (commonly 1.00 x 0.35 mm), no obvious lateral walls. Frontal shield convex, smooth, regularly and evenly perforated by small, sunken pores, ascopore slightly disto-medial, surrounded by a raised, slightly flared and crenulate rim, most developed proximally and laterally. Primary orifice transversely oval, obscured by short peristome, not raised much from frontal shield and angled at approximately 45° to it, secondary orifice circular with a crenulate rim. Brooding zooids with peristomes of normal height but inflated, bulbous at base.

**Remarks** *Margaretta gracilior* is characterised by its whorls of two autozooids, its short peristome and single tubes in both nodes and basis rami.

With ontogeny, the older internodes of *Margaretta gracilior* become thickened and the secondary orifices and even the peristomes themselves become immersed in calcification. Although the original node forming a new branch consists of only one tube in this species accessory tubes (kenozooids/rhizoids?) form at the proximal end of the new internode and join the parental internode at the basis rami.

The number of autozooids in a whorl is perhaps the best starting point for species identification. Harmer (1957) only described two species of *Margaretta* with whorls of two autozooids, *M. gracilior* and *M. hirsuta* (Lamouroux, 1816), a junior synonym of *M. barbata* (Lamarck, 1816). The other species of *Margaretta* that Harmer described from the Southwest Pacific have, three, four or five autozooids in a whorl. *M. barbata*, which is mainly found from southern Australia and New Zealand, possesses a unique diagnostic character, viz. a pair of chitinous setae-producing pores between the ascopore and the peristome in every zooid. *M. gracilior* does not have such a feature.

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**Distribution** Originally described from Tanzania, E. Africa, *Margaretta gracilior* has been recorded from throughout the Indo-Pacific, from the Red Sea down to Madagascar, eastwards through Malaysia and the Philippines, as far east as Samoa. However, it has not yet been recorded from the Great Barrier Reef. In the Solomon Islands it was found from a number of locations around Mbanika Island, Russell Islands and Gibson Island, Hamilton Passage, Choiseul.

