

Rhynchozoon bifurcum Harmer, 1957. Tilbrook, 2006, p.295, Pl.65A-B

Rhynchozoon bifurcum Harmer, 1957
Plate 65A-B

Rhynchozoon bifurcum Harmer, 1957: 1070, pl. 70, figs 6, 13-15.

Rhynchozoon bifurcum: Ryland & Hayward, 1992: 288, figs 29b-d.

Type material Holotype: NHM 2002.7.10.1, (two slides) Torres Strait, A.C. Haddon Coll. Feb.1888-1890 (TS 103¹ & TS 103²).
Paratype: NHM 2002.7.10.2, (two slides) Torres Strait, A.C. Haddon Coll. Feb.1888-1890 (TS 189¹ & TS 189²).

Other material examined SBMNH 365782-784, **407-84**; NHM 1999.8.6.13, (199.A¹/1806) "Siboga" Station 274, Off Jedan, Aru Islands, 57 m; NHM 2002.7.10.3, (two slides - 199.A^{2&3}/1806) "Siboga" Station 274, Off Jedan, Aru Islands, 57 m; NHM 1999.8.6.14, (131.N/1805) "Siboga" Station 164, West of North end of New Guinea, 32 m; NHM 1999.8.6.15, (23.M/1804) "Siboga" Station 50, Badjo Bay, West Flores, 0-40 m; NHM 2002.7.10.4, (23.M¹/1804) "Siboga" Station 50, Badjo Bay, West Flores, 0-40 m; NHM 1996.2.23.56, Station 25, Heron Island, Australia; NHM 2000.4.11.1283, Lodestone Reef, NNE of Townsville, Queensland, 18 m; NMH 2002.7.10.5, New Harbour, Singapore, R. Hamitch Coll., 13-18 m.

Description Colony a multilaminar mamillate sheet. Autozooids oval to hexagonal (0.50 x 0.30 mm). Frontal shield convex, developing rounded nodules early in ontogeny. Primary orifice wider than long (ca 0.14 x 0.10 mm), almost D-shaped, distal denticulations small, proximal border shallowly concave, with small, rectangular, inconspicuous condyles. No oral spines. Suboral avicularium, incorporated into peristome, in all autozooids, rostrum triangular, hooked distally, its proximal portion continuous with short, tapered uncinat process projecting into the peristome lumen, directed laterally. Peristome completely encircling orifice, generally obscuring it, a stout mucro developed on top of avicularium contributing to it. Frontal avicularia common, generally one per autozoid, of varying lengths, proximolateral to peristome, directed proximally, rostrum elongate oval to narrowly spatulate, with large rostral palate and small opesia, mandible narrowly spatulate in all but largest where it is deeply forked, crossbar complete. Ovicell broader than long, with extensive, flattened, granular endooecial exposure.

Remarks *Rhynchozoon bifurcum* is characterised by its almost D-shaped primary orifice, with its wide, saucer-shaped proximal border with inconspicuous, rectangular condyles. Perhaps the most easily recognisable character is the deeply forked mandible of the largest frontal avicularia.

Ryland & Hayward (1992) noted that the peristomial rim eventually consists of six or seven stout, conical processes evenly spaced around the secondary orifice. This was not seen in the material described here, which was perhaps at an earlier ontogenetic stage than the material described from Queensland.

Distribution *Rhynchozoon bifurcum* was originally recorded from the Chagos Archipelago, Torres Strait and Singapore and it has since been recorded from Queensland, Australia. In the Solomon Islands several small colonies were found from Gibson Island, Hamilton Passage, Choiseul. This is only the third record of an undoubtedly Indo-West Pacific species.

