

OPHIOPSILA ANNULOSA (M. SARS) IN THE PLYMOUTH AREA

By H. G. Vevers, M.A., D.Phil.

Zoologist at the Plymouth Laboratory

Norman (1905) gave a short account of the distribution of the ophiuroid, *Ophiopsila annulosa*, having dredged it himself from Birterbuy Bay, Ireland, in 1874, and from outside Dartmouth Harbour in 1904. He also obtained specimens in 1903 from the Plymouth Laboratory; these had been dredged in 12–25 fathoms on Mewstone Ledge and Stoke Point Grounds, near Plymouth, and were recorded as not uncommon in the red sandstone, especially in old *Pholadidea* crypts. Mortensen (1927) expressed some doubt as to Norman's identification of the Irish specimens; he noted that the Plymouth specimens had been found in exactly the same locality and habitat as the smaller and commoner species, *Ophiopsila aranea*, and considered that the presence of the larger species in British waters could not be definitely settled until new records were to hand. *O. annulosa* was not recorded in the *Plymouth Marine Fauna* (Mar. Biol. Assoc., 1931) and no specimens have been found in the reference museum at the Laboratory.

On 8 July 1948 a single perfect specimen of *O. annulosa* was dredged by R.V. Sabella on the Mewstone Grounds in 20 fathoms. This specimen was not found in the crevices of the sandstone boulders, but came up loose in the dredge bag. A second specimen, for which I am indebted to Mr P. G. Corbin, was dredged on the Mewstone Grounds ($\frac{3}{4}$ mile south of the Mewstone, 18–20 fathoms) on 5 April 1949.

Furthermore, it has now been possible, through the courtesy of Dr H. W. Parker, to examine the specimens of *O. annulosa* in the Department of Zoology at the British Museum (Natural History). Three of the four specimens are from Norman's collections (viz. Birterbuy Bay 1874, Kenmare Bay 1877, and Zoological Station Naples 1887), while the remaining specimen was collected at Naples in 1948. These specimens undoubtedly belong to the same species as the specimens taken at Plymouth in 1948 and 1949. They were easily distinguishable from *O. aranea* Forbes, the marked brown and white banding of the robust arms and the large number of arm spines in *O. annulosa* being quite characteristic.

REFERENCES

- MARINE BIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, 1931. *Plymouth Marine Fauna*, 2nd ed.
 MORTENSEN, TH., 1927. *Handbook of the Echinoderms of the British Isles*. Oxford.
 NORMAN, A. M., 1905. *Ophiopsila annulosa* (M. Sars), a British ophiuroid. *Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist.*, Ser. 7, Vol. 16, pp. 360–1.