



Predation of the sea anemone *Bunodosoma cangicum* Corrêa, 1964 (Cnidaria, Anthozoa, Actiniidae) on a swimming crab *Callinectes* sp. Stimpson, 1860 (Decapoda, Brachyura, Portunidae)

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Sea anemones are solitary polyps that belong to the Phylum Cnidaria and the Class Anthozoa (Order Actinaria or Corallimorpharia) (Fautin & Allen 1994). These animals inhabit shallow or deep coastal waters throughout the world, but are particularly diverse in tropical oceans (Ruppert *et al.* 2005). Although they are not considered especially voracious predators, sea anemones feed on a variety of prey that includes small fish, sea cucumbers, mollusks and crustaceans, especially crabs (Fautin & Allen 1994). Sea anemones of the species *Bunodosoma cangicum* Corrêa, 1964 are frequently seen in the inter-tidal zone during low tides on the coastal reefs of Cabo Branco beach (João Pessoa, Paraíba State, Brazil) (Fig. A). On April 1, 2007, during field work on these reefs (7°08'50" S, 34°47'51" W) a predation event was witnessed involving *Bunodosoma cangicum* attacking a swimming crab, *Callinectes* sp. Stimpson, 1860 (Fig. B). At the moment of the sighting, the inter-tidal region was totally exposed due to the low tide. The anemone was approximately 5 cm tall and the swimming crab occupied the entire gastro vascular cavity. The crab appeared to be larger than the anemone could hold, and the crab was in fact partially visible, which allowed its identification to the genus level. The crab was covered by a transparent gelatinous material, presumably secreted by the anemone to facilitate the digestive processes. In light of the sessile habit of the anemones and the large size of the crab, this animal was probably captured during high tide, and the ingestion and digestion processes continued even as the tide ebbed. Although the remains of swimming crabs have been reported among the stomach contents of sea anemones (Fautin & Allen 1994, Ruppert *et al.* 2005), this is the first photographic documentation of the predation of *Callinectes* sp. by *Bunodosoma cangicum* under natural conditions. Picture's characteristics: Digital Machine model Canon PowerShot S50, 5 megapixels resolution (180 dpi), diaphragm aperture 2.8 (Fig. A) and 3.5 (Fig. B), time of exposition 1/200 (Fig. A) and 1/1000 (Fig. B).

References

- Fautin, D. G. & Allen, G. R. 1994. **Anemone fishes and their host sea anemones**. Tetra-Press, Germany, 158 p.
Ruppert, E. E., Fox, R. S. & Barnes, R. D. 2005. **Zoologia dos invertebrados**. 7ª. edição. Editora Roca, São Paulo, 1.168p.

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