

Natural History Snippets

Brief reports by members based on their observations of nature
 Members are invited to submit their photographs and stories to muhudubella@gmail.com for publication



in 75 genera and 19 families recorded for the whole Indian region.

There are two main groups of barnacles: sessile, or Acorn barnacles (nos. 3 - 10) that attach directly to hard substrates, and stalked, or Goose barnacles (nos. 1 & 2), usually attached to floating objects like driftwood. Some sessile barnacles are commensal or parasitic (nos. 9 & 10).

“Blistering Barnacles” - in all shapes and sizes

Glancing down at the side of a concrete culvert in the Mangrove Restoration site at the Anawilundawa Sanctuary, I noticed barnacle skeletons on the cement. This culvert was on a canal taking water from the Dutch Canal to prawn ponds, now abandoned.

Barnacles are crustaceans—relatives of prawns, lobsters, and crabs. All species are marine or estuarine (brackish water). They occupy various habitats and are variously shaped. Sri Lanka barnacles have not been systematically studied, as far as I am aware. A recent (2021) review of the diversity of Indian Barnacles published in *Frontiers of Science** found that 40 species have been described in the South India and Sri Lanka ecoregion, out of a total of 144 species

*<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2021.657651/full>



1 & 2: The Goose barnacle *Lepas* sp. attached to drift-wood washed up on a beach at Nilaveli, 15.1.2005. These are seen quite frequently after stormy weather attached to a variety of

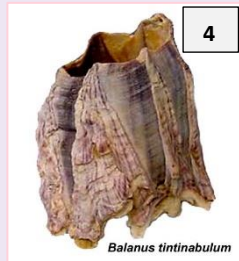


floating objects—plastic bottles, rubber slippers etc. The animal is enclosed within the calcareous plates and is attached by the orange-brown coloured, flexible stalk.

Acorn barnacles are attached to hard substrates by a circular or oval base plate; usually very firmly. The animal is enclosed in a case consisting of (usually) 6 immovable plates; sometime 4 or 8. The opening above is closed by a two-part operculum that can be opened to allow the animal to extend its cirri for feeding. Opercula are usually lost in dead barnacles.

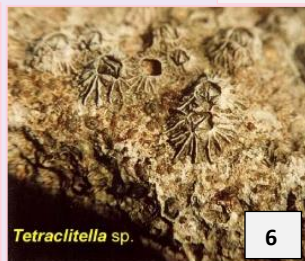


3



4

Balanus tintinnabulum



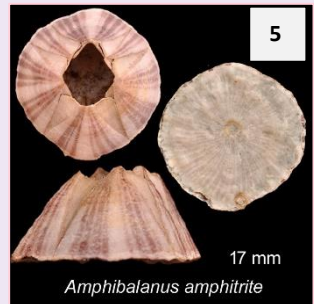
6

Tetraclitella sp.



7

Chthamalus sp. on intertidal rocks, Mt. Lavinia

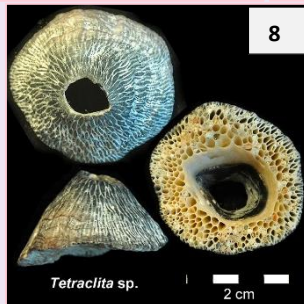


5

17 mm

Amphibalanus amphitrite

Individual plates and opercula can be seen clearly in (3). The barnacles were attached to oyster shells. *Megabalanus tintinnabulum* (4) is a large species that is tubular in shape and grows to a height of around 6 cm or more. *Amphibalanus amphitrite* (5) is a common species.



8

Tetraclitella sp.

2 cm



9

8 mm high

Acasta

10

Numbers (6) & (7) are both intertidal; *Tetraclitella* is uncommon, with spiny, ridged plates, the other common and easily found. *Tetraclitella* (8) was found on shallow, submerged rocks while SCUBA-diving, and are unusual in having fused plates covered in calcareous tubes. The genus also reported attached to Mangrove trunks. Two coral barnacles are in (9): on a branching coral, the barnacle is covered by coral tissue (arrowed) and on a *Symphyllia* coral the barnacle is totally immersed. The genus *Acasta* (10) lives totally immersed inside sponges. The basal plate is characteristically bowl-shaped.

Malik Fernando, 8.4.2023