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Cheilostome bryozoan *Hippoporina indica* (Pillai, 1978), from Colombo Port: A new record

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Bryozoans (moss animals) are aquatic invertebrates. Some members are well known for fouling on ships and submerged coastal structures. They are also one of the major pathways of introducing non-native species around the world. However, knowledge on bryozoans in Sri Lanka is very limited.

Present study is to investigate bryozoan fouling organisms in Colombo Port which is located in strategically important centre of East-West maritime route, thus increased vulnerability to marine bio invasions. Monthly samples of encrusting bryozoans were collected from October 2014 to July 2015 from eight sampling locations using artificial settlement collectors based on the protocol developed by Center for Research on Introduced Marine Pests (CRIMP); consist of a rope backbone supporting a number of horizontal PVC pipe arms that are attached to the settlement surfaces. The collectors were submerged in four different depths where the first set was 1 m below the water surface and others were placed at 1 m depth intervals from the first. Half of the settlement collectors were replaced each month corresponding to a two month collection interval for each replacing plate of half of the collector. Fouling organisms were identified microscopically.

Six encrusting bryozoans were recorded from the samples. Among them, *Hippoporina indica* is a new record for Sri Lankan coastal waters. They were found in two months old replacing collectors in seven sampling locations with a covering percentages ranging from 0.5 – 30.75%. *H. indica* is native to India and China but have been introduced to Australia, Malaysia, Panama and in Caribbean. It is uncertain whether the *H. indica* is native or introduced to Sri Lankan waters due to unavailability of baseline records. Therefore, further investigations and long-term monitoring are proposed to assess the status of this species in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Hippoporina indica*, encrusting bryozoan, Colombo Port, marine biofouling