Increasing Marine Taxonomic Knowledge in Mozambique: the Case of Two Neglected Taxa

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Background

Mozambique has the third largest coastline in mainland East Africa. This coastline is – Somalia excluded – taxonomically the least explored in Eastern Africa. This is a matter of much regret given that studies show that this is an extremely productive and highly biodiverse region. Mozambique’s marine environment therefore deserves detailed taxonomic study. Regrettfully, such study was largely non-existing for many taxa.

Methods

From April and May of 2018 a team of Belgian-Mozambican marine scientists sampled two neglected taxa in the South of Mozambique (Inhambane): echinoderms and macroalgae. In the present communication we report on this expedition.

Results

16 SCUBA dives and 4 intertidal collections resulted in 465 samples of macroalgae, representing an estimated 250 different species, and 322 samples of echinoderms, representing an estimated 75 species. We detail our findings and stress that our effort is an important contribution to the unveiling of the distribution and diversity of echinoderms and macroalgae in the region, and that ultimately taxonomic studies like these will ameliorate the management of biodiversity in Mozambique. In turn such better understanding of biodiversity will lead to much desired poverty alleviation.

Key words: Echinodermata; Algae; Taxonomy; Poverty Alleviation.

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