Diversity and distribution of octocorals and scleractinians in the Persian Gulf region

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Appendix 1

The First *in situ* and Shallow-Water Observation of the Genus *Pseudothelogorgia* (Octocorallia: Keroeididae)

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Ofwegen (1990) described the species *Lignella hartogi* based on material from the Arabian Sea (22°32′N, 68°07′E) from a depth of 57 m, collected by the R/V Anton Bruun expedition in the Indian Ocean in 1963-1964. At the time, he compared those samples with fragmentary material of *L. richardii* (Lamouroux, 1816) present in the Netherlands Centre for Biodiversity Naturalis (NCB Naturalis; Leiden, the Netherlands) and assigned the new species to the genus *Lignella*. Later, Bayer (1992: 506) concluded that the identity of the *L. richardii* could not be determined with any degree of certainty. Therefore, he established a new genus, *Thelogorgia*, and referred material previously identified as *L. richardii* to one of his four *Thelogorgia* species. However, Bayer did not re-examine *L. hartogi*. Subsequently, Ofwegen (1994) compared *L. hartogi* with species belonging to *Thelogorgia* and described a new genus *Pseudothelogorgia*, which included *L. hartogi*, based on differences in sclerites. Later *P. hartogi* was reported again by Dr. S.D. Cairns of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History (Washington DC, USA) who determined that material collected in Palau from a depth of 207 m belonged to this species (pers. comm.). Since then, it has not been reported until surprisingly the 1st author collected it at the Daymaniyat Is., Gulf of Oman (23°51'43.22″N, 58°6'15.16″E) at a depth of 18 m where it was photographed underwater, the 1st live photograph taken of *Pseudothelogorgia* (Fig. 1). The material is deposited in the NCB Naturalis (RMNH Coel. 39634).

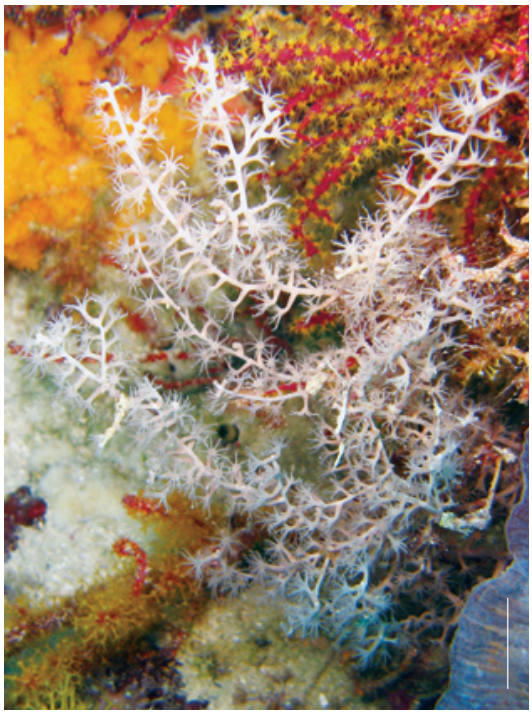

Fig. 1. Underwater photograph of *Pseudothelogorgia hartogi*, Gulf of Oman, 18 m in depth. Scale bar = 2 cm.

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