

Monobrachium parasitum, a One-Tentacled Hydroid, Collected at Vancouver Island

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THE COLONIAL HYDROID *Monobrachium parasitum* (Mereschowsky) is of interest to systematic and developmental biologists because of its peculiar form and its commensal habitat. Each feeding polyp has only a single tentacle, and the colony grows and develops a characteristic polymorphic pattern on living bivalves (Wagner, 1890; Hand, 1957). This note reports the rapid collection of this unusual hydroid without heavy equipment.

On August 16, 1964, 13 colonies of *M. parasitum* were collected at Fraser's (1918) original locality in Nanoose Bay, Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Nanoose Bay is about 1 km wide and 3 km long, and opens eastward. Water turnover is extensive during tidal changes. Tidal currents are located predominantly along the northern shore. Accordingly, the bottom of the northern third of the bay is composed of sand and light gravel, with remains of broken shells. The southern two-thirds presents a graded bottom from fine sand centrally to mud along the shallow southern shore. The bivalve *Axinopsis* was collected with a 1-mm mesh conical net 2 inches in diameter, towed for 10 minutes behind a small boat. *Monobrachium* colonies were found in three out of seven tows made in the central third of the bay (124° 9.2' W, 49°

15.8' N, 16–17 fathoms), but not in either the deeper northern or the shallower southern sides.

Axinopsis with *Monobrachium* which were brought into the laboratory showed rapid and extensive burrowing through fine sand. Generally the hydroids were completely under the surface of the sand. No colonies showed any evidence of reproductive polyps or of medusa buds.

Hand (1957) found *Monobrachium* in a number of dredge loads from the California and Baja California coast. Besides Hand, only Fraser (1918) had reported *Monobrachium* from the West Coast of North America. Repeated dredgings in the San Juan Archipelago, Washington, failed to reveal any specimens, even in habitats similar to those prevailing on the east coast of Vancouver Island.

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