**The first finding of echinoid-specific genus *Mecomerinx* (Crustacea: Copepoda) in the South China Sea associated with *Echinometra* (Echinodermata)**

***Chen Xingru***

*Student*

*Biology faculty, Shenzhen MSU-BIT University, China*

*E–mail: 965378695@qq.com*

The symbiotic (commensal and parasitic) copepods that live in and on sea urchins are a large and diverse group of microscopic crustaceans that is only just beginning to be studied. Numerous females and males of copepod crustacean belonging to the echinoid-specific genus *Mecomerinx* Humes, 1977 (Pseudanthessiidae) was found associated with the sea urchin *Echinometra* sp. (Echinodermata: Echinoidea) in the South China Sea (Dapeng Peninsula, Shenzhen). Copepods were washout from sea urchins collected in October 2022 at a depth of up to two meters by snorkelling. The сopepods are well diagnosed as members of the genus and tentatively identified as *Mecomerinx* *notabilis* (Humes, Cressey 1961) originally described from Madagascar associated with *Echinometra mathaei.* (Blainville). This species *Mecomerinx* *notabilis* was later recorded by the Gulf of Aqaba and New Caledonia on the same species of sea urchin (Stock 1967; Humes 1977). The study of morphological details of the collected copepods revealed some differences from the description of the type material collected from Madagascar, and similarities with copepods described from New Caledonia. This is the first finding in the South China Sea of the copepod of the genus *Mecomerinx* on the sea urchin of the genus *Echinometra*. The taxonomic affiliation of the copepod to the species described from Madagascar and New Caledonia needs additional clarification.