

Echinoderms in the collection of the Natural History Museum, Zoological Survey Department, Pakistan

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Echinoderms are an important group of exclusively marine animals. For commercial and academic point of view a survey of local fauna is thus essential to explore commercial and potential commercial species. The echinoderm fauna of Pakistan remained neglected. Hoque (1969) reported 24 species whereas Tahera (1992) listed 26 species from Pakistan. Wood-Mason and Alcock (1891), Anderson (1894), Koehler (1899, 1914, 1927) Koehler and Vaney (1908), Clark (1931, 1932) and James (1966) have contributed to the echinoderms of India. Present paper describes the echinoderms housed in the Natural History Museum of the Zoological Survey Department, Pakistan.

Material and Methods

Present study was based on the material collected during 1949-1988 from various parts of the Pakistan coast and housed in the Museum of Zoological Survey Department. Additional samples collected from Keameri, Buleji, Native Jetty, Baba Island, Manora along Karachi coast, and Pasni from Balochistan coast between 1991 and 2008 were also examined. All the specimens are now housed in the Natural History Museum of the Zoological Survey Department, Pakistan. The samples were preserved in 70% alcohol.

Results and Discussions:

The study revealed a total of sixteen species where housed in the Natural History Museum of the Zoological Survey Department.

Asteroidea (star fishes)

1. *Astropecten indicus*
2. *Anthenea rudis*
3. *Asterina Lorioli* and
4. *Asterina burtonii*

Ophiuroidea (brittle stars)

1. *Ophioplocus imbricata* and
2. *Macrophiothrix aspidota*

Crinoidea (feather star)

1. *Comanthus samoanus*

Echinoidea (sea urchins)

1. *Echinometra mathaei*
2. *Echinostrephus molaris* and
3. *Stomopneustes variolaris*

Holothuroidea (sea cucumber)

1. *Stolus buccalis*
2. *Actinopyga mauritiana*
3. *Holothuria (Thymiosycia) arenicola*
4. *Synapta inhaerens*
5. *Staurothyone rosacea*, and
6. *Holothuria leucospilota*

The study revealed that echinoderm fauna of Pakistan is well diversified. And all major classes of Echinoderms are represented in Pakistan. It may, however, be noticed that some of the species reported by Haque (1969) from Pakistan are not represented in the present collection of Zoological Survey Department. These include Asteroidea (*Astropecten euryaxanthus* and *Luidia amculata*), Ophiuroidea (*Ophiopeza fallax*, *Ophionereis dubia* and *Amphiura tenuis*), Echinoidea (*Temnopleurus torenmaticus* and *Clypeaster rarispinus*) and Holothuroidea (*Stereoderma forbesi*).

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