

# AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

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## OCCASIONAL NOTES.

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### III. WESTERN AUSTRALIAN PRAWNS AND SPONGES.

In the report of the Fishing Industry for Western Australia, referred to by Mr. Edgar R. Waite, Mr. Gale writes:—"I am pleased to be able to report that prawns in fairly large quantities were caught in this locality. The species discovered, *Euphausia pellucida*, are very large, some measuring as much as nine and three quarter inches from head to tail, and from a gastronomic standpoint are very excellent. They appear to exist in quantities over a large area of ground, and I am firmly of opinion that a new industry will eventually be established in these waters."

A single large prawn was included in the collection forwarded, and this I identify with *Penaeus semisulcatus*, De Haan. As this attains considerable size it is probable that the large prawns mentioned are of this species.

It is extremely improbable that they are correctly associated with the Schizopod *Euphausia*; *E. pellucida*, Dana, being fully adult at 15 mm. (=  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch).

The sponges obtained by the expedition are as follows, all except one being of commercial value:—

*Euspongia illawarra*, Whitelegge.

Four examples of this valuable sponge were collected. Three (Nos. 3, 4, 6) from the beach at Shark Bay and one specimen washed ashore alive at Esperance.

*Hippospongia equina*, Schmidt, var. *elastica*, Lendenfeld, is represented by three examples (Nos. 2, 8, 13).

No. 2 is a beach-worn specimen. No. 8 was washed ashore at Shark Bay; the size of this particular specimen is remarkable, it is stated to have been eight feet long, and three feet by one foot. No. 13 was obtained alive at Fremantle. This variety is identical with the sponge imported from Europe and usually sold by the chemists and druggists in Sydney. The majority of Australian specimens are much coarser in texture and not quite so tough as

the imported article. This may be due to many causes such as higher temperature, food supply, or strong currents. The American and West Indian sponges although identical with the Mediterranean variety are inferior, the texture being more open and somewhat wanting in toughness.

*Hippospongia equina*, var. *meandriniformis*, Hyatt. (No. 5).

This variety is rather coarse in general appearance, the fibres are fine but distant from each other; they are, however, exceedingly tough and elastic, two qualities which render this form of great commercial value. The specimen was obtained at Shark Bay.

*Hippospongia*, sp. (No. 12).

This was obtained alive at Fremantle. It is possibly a form of *H. canaliculata*, Lendenfeld, but it differs greatly from specimens in the Australian Museum, the texture is much finer and the surface is villose. This appearance may be due to the fact that the West Australian example has been macerated, whilst the Museum specimens have been dried in the fleshy condition.

*Thorecta meandrina*, Lendenfeld, is probably No. 7 and is of no commercial value. Shark Bay, W.A.

THOMAS WHITELEGGE.