

6. A REVISION OF THE ASTERINID GENUS
NEPANTHIA GRAY, 1840
(ECHINODERMATA: ASTEROIDEA), WITH THE DESCRIPTION OF
THREE NEW SPECIES

FRANCIS W. E. ROWE.

The Australian Museum, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia
and

LOISETTE M. MARSH

The Western Australian Museum, Perth, W.A., Australia

SUMMARY

The genus *Nepanthia* Gray, 1840 is revised and eight species recognised, including three new species, one from New South Wales, one from north of Sabah, Borneo and one from the Sulu Sea, Philippines. Fisher's opinion that *Parasterina crassa* should be referred to *Nepanthia* is supported and the species is here included. Variation in the species *N. belcheri* (Perrier) is discussed and the species *N. brevis* (Perrier), *N. suffarcinata* Sladen, *N. joubini* Koehler, *N. variabilis* H. L. Clark and *N. magnispina* H. L. Clark are considered conspecific with it. A key is given for the eight species recognised.

INTRODUCTION

Gray (1840; 1866), described the genus *Nepanthia*, in the family Pentacerotidae, for two species *N. tessellata* (from an unknown locality) and *N. maculata* (From Migupou, Philippine Islands).

Müller and Troschel (1842) referred these species to *Chaetaster* which they described a few months prior to Gray's *Nepanthia* in 1840, considering Gray's species to be congeneric with *C. subulata* (Lamarck) (type-species of *Chaetaster* by monotypy).

Perrier (1875), placed *Chaetaster* in the family Astropectinidae, synonymising *Nepanthia tessellata* with *C. longipes* (Retzius). He considered *Nepanthia* to be a subgenus of *Asterina* (family Asterinidae; in which family it has since remained) recognising the validity of *A. (N.) maculata*, the type-specimen of which he examined. He described two new species *A. (N.) belcheri* and *A. (N.) brevis*. This action leaves *N. maculata* as type species of *Nepanthia*, failing Gray's nomination of a type-species from either of the two he included in his genus.

Viguier (1878), placed *Chaetaster* in the family Linkiadae of his subclass of asteroids (Stellérides) "Astéries adambulacraires" (characterised by the predominance of the adambulacral plates in the mouth ring), listing *Nepanthia* as a synonym of *Chaetaster*. He did not discuss the genus or its species.

Perrier (1884), in his remarkable classification of asteroids, based on the form of the pedicellariae, without comment listed *Nepanthia* in the family Asterinidae, Order "Stelleridae Spinulosae" (p. 164, referred to as Echinulatae in subsequent pages).

Sladen (1889), considered the skeletal features of the species of *Nepanthia* to be sufficiently distinctive to "warrant the retention of *Nepanthia* as an independent genus", in the family Asterinidae (subfamily Asterininae) of the new order Phanerozonia.

Gray, 1847 described *Patiria? crassa* from Western Australia in a third group of species (*P. ocellifera*, *P. obtusa* and *P. ? crassa*) of his genus *Patiria*. These were characterised by having 5