

## First record of *Idas simpsoni* (Mollusca: Bivalvia: Mytilidae) in the Adriatic Sea

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More than 127 specimens of the bivalve mollusc *Idas simpsoni* were collected from the skull of a fin whale *Balaenoptera physalus*. The skull was trawled up from a depth of 430 m near Mljet Island in the south Adriatic Sea. This is the first finding of *I. simpsoni* in the Adriatic Sea.

### SYSTEMATICS

Subclassis PTEROMORPHIA Beurlen, 1944  
Order MYTILOIDA Férussac, 1822  
Family MYTILIDAE Rafinesque, 1815  
Genus *Idas* Jeffreys, 1876  
*Idas simpsoni* (Marshall, 1900) (Figure 1)

#### Synonyms

*Myrina*, Marshall 1900; *Idasola*, Iredale, 1915; *Adipicola*, Dautzenberg, 1927.

A different name of the genus *Adula*, H. & A. Adams, 1857 is still used by some authors (Tebble, 1966; Barsotti & Giannini, 1974; Berrow et al., 1995).

#### General distribution

*Idas simpsoni* is a rare bivalve mollusc which lives in deep waters on the continental shelf from southern Iceland to Portugal (Deane, 1929: according to Tebble, 1966; Warén, 1991; Poppe & Goto, 1993; Berrow et al., 1995), in the Mediterranean Sea near Capraia (Barsotti & Giannini, 1974), and now the species is recorded for the first time in the Adriatic Sea.

#### Habitat

A peculiarity of *Idas simpsoni* is its quite exceptional habitat. This bivalve is attached by byssus threads in the sutures of old whales' skulls, especially numerous on the weathered ones, where the sutures are deeply grooved (Tebble, 1966; Barsotti & Giannini, 1974; Warén, 1991; Poppe & Goto, 1993; Berrow et al., 1995). The species has also been reported on a piece of old wood trunk (Tebble, 1966; Barsotti & Giannini, 1974; Marshall 1900: according to Berrow et al., 1995).

#### Finding location

In the Adriatic Sea more than 127 live specimens of the bivalve mollusc *Idas simpsoni* were attached to a part of the maxilla of a fin whale *Balaenoptera physalus* (Linnaeus, 1758). The maxilla was trawled up near Mljet Island in the south Adriatic Sea (42°29.183'N 018°01.585'E) from a



**Figure 1.** *Idas simpsoni* (Marshall, 1900) (Photograph: Dr Vladimir Onofri).

depth of 430 m, on 15 August, 2003. The bone 269 cm in length was devoid of flesh, and collected specimens were located on inside cavities from veins, nerves and/or the maxilla joint (Figure 2).

#### Biometrical characteristics

Each specimen was removed from an attached place and their shell size was measured by Vernier caliper, along its greatest length from the umbo vertically to the valve margin. The size-distribution of the measured Adriatic specimens ranged from 8 mm to 21 mm in length. Berrow et al. (1995) found specimens ranged between 3.6 to 31.2 mm in length in Irish waters, and the largest one reaching about 40 mm in length was reported by Warén (1991) in Icelandic waters. The largest Adriatic specimens measured 21 mm. Deane (1929) according to Berrow et al. (1995) mentioned that usually smaller specimens were attached on more exposed parts of the skull and larger ones in the cavities. In the Adriatic Sea, no differences were observed between the length of individuals and the attachment place on the skull, but various sized specimens were found in the same ili cavities. Furthermore, Berrow et al. (1995) stated that favourable conditions for *Idas* growth occur within the skull cavity which is still oozing with oil while in non-oily areas *Idas* was absent.

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**Figure 2.** Part of the maxilla of the fin whale *Balaenoptera physalus* (Linnaeus 1758) with the bivalve specimens of *Idas simpsoni* (Marshall, 1900) (Photograph: Dr Jakša Bolotin and Mr Nikša Glavić).

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