



Figure 1. *Macrorhynchia philippina* colonies growing on shallow rocky reefs of Punta de Antequera, at 5 m deep. Tenerife Island.

*MACRORHYNCHIA PHILIPPINA* KIRCHENPAUER, 1872: AN INVASIVE HYDROZOAN SEEN IN THE SHALLOW ROCKY REEFS OF TENERIFE ISLAND. José Carlos Hernández & Jorge Núñez. Departamento de Biología Animal, Edafología y Geología. Universidad de La Laguna. Canary Islands, Spain.

In October of 2020 and during the year 2021, hundreds of the hydrozoan *Macrorhynchia philippina* colonies have been observed in Tenerife Island. Colonies were always found between 2 to 15 meters deep. Hydrozoans were more abundant at Punta de Antequera (Lat: 28.53129776; Long: -16.12552643) with average densities of  $20 \pm 5$  colonies /  $m^2$  and with 5 to 10 cm heights. Colonies have also been observed at Boca Cangrejo (Lat: 28.40619871; Long: -16.31426811) and Añaza (Lat: 28.41978719; Long: -16.29512787) localities but always in lower densities, with an average of 2 colonies /  $m^2$ . Densities were estimated using  $10 \times 50$   $cm^2$  quadrats at the settled colonies spots and surroundings (25  $m^2$  total area explored at each locality). This hydroid has previously been observed in Madeira (Bianchi *et al.* 1998), Selvages and Gran Canaria Island (Riera 2016); and its rapid colonization process has also been studied (Espino *et al.* 2021). However, this is the first time that the species is registered in Tenerife Island, inhabiting natural substrates (fig. 1).

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This species is not the first non-indigenous sessile cnidarian detected in the Canaries. Previously, the species *Millepora* sp. (Clemente *et al.* 2011), *Culicia* sp., *Oculina patagonica* and *Tubastrea coccinea* (Brito *et al.* 2017) had also been detected. The presence of the last three species was related with maritime traffic as the main dispersal vector. It's relevant to highlight that these species were originally found inside or near industrial ports. This is also a plausible explanation for the arrival of *M. philippina*. However, its presence in natural substrates, far away from the main industrial ports, attest for its incredible capacity to colonize new environments. It is also a proof of the ongoing rapid expansion of its populations in Tenerife and Gran Canaria Islands (Bianchi *et al.* 1998).

In agreement with Espino and collaborators (2021), urgent environmental policies are needed to monitor the expansion of this species and to perform studies aimed to understand its ecological role in the shallow rocky benthic communities.

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