

# Taxonomy and Biogeography of the Persian Gulf Subtidal Sponges: An Estimate of $\alpha$ and $\beta$ Diversity

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## Abstract

During the present study, subtidal marine sponges of the Persian Gulf were studied taxonomically. Sampling was carried out by scuba diving from: Kish Island, Larak Island and Nayband Bay during 2003 and 2009. Whenever possible, specimens were photographed in situ. Identified species then were confirmed by Dr. Helmut Lehnert from Germany. 11 species belong to two classes and nine families were recorded: *Ircinia echinata*, *Hyrtios erectus*, *Spongia arabica*, *Dysidea cinerea*, *Terpios viridis*, *Callyspongia clavata*, *C. vasselli*, *Callyspongia* sp., *Haliclona tuberosa*, *Gelliodes carnosus*, *Leucetta* sp.. Four species are new records for the region: *Callyspongia* sp., *Gelliodes carnosus*, *Spongia arabica*, *Terpios viridis*. Our results showed that Larak Island has highest  $\alpha$  diversity ( $\alpha=10$ ). In terms of  $\beta$  diversity, Kish and Nayband Bay showed highest species composition.

Keywords: Marine sponges, Taxonomy, Biogeography, Persian Gulf.

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