

*Research Note*

**New Host and Locality for *Kathlania leptura* (Rudolphi)  
(Nematoda: Oxyurata: Kathlanidae)**

Marine testudines are known to host two species of kathlanid nematodes, *Kathlania leptura* (Rudolphi, 1819) Travassos, 1918 and *Tonaudia tonaudia* (Lane, 1914) Travassos, 1918. Each species has been reported infrequently but exhibits a wide geographic distribution. Both *K. leptura* and *T. tonaudia* have been reported from Ceylon and from the Mediterranean Sea near Egypt, and *K. leptura* has been reported also from the coast of Brazil (Skrjabin, Shikhobalova, and Lagodovskaya, 1964, in Skrjabin (ed.) Essentials of Nematodology, vol. 13, part 3, Academy of Sciences of the USSR, English translation, 1976, TT75-50011, U.S. Department of Commerce, NTIS, Springfield, Virginia 22151). This study reports *K. leptura* from the east African coast for the first time.

On 30 October 1975 a specimen of *Lepidochelys olivacea* (Eschscholtz, 1829) was found floating dead, belly up, about 8 km SW of Zanzibar Town, Zanzibar (approximately 39°8'E and 6°16'S). The turtle, evidently an adult female, had a straight carapace length of 64 cm. The specimen was deposited in the museum of the East African Marine Fisheries Organization of Zanzibar as No. JFL09. Cause of death was not determined, but may have been by concussion from dynamite explosions, used illegally but frequently for "fishing." The gastrointestinal tract was examined by JF and found to contain a variety of items in various stages of digestion; details of that study will be published elsewhere. Several hundred nematodes were also found.

The nematodes occurred throughout the intestinal tract and the stomach. They were separated according to site of occurrence (stomach, upper intestine, lower intestine, rectum) and fixed with 10% formalin. Upon receiving the specimens, DRB transferred them to 70% glycerin-alcohol for permanent storage. Nematodes were examined as temporary whole mounts cleared with lacto-phenol. Representative specimens have been deposited as USNM Helm. Coll. No. 75757 (males and females).

Despite the widespread occurrence of specimens throughout the gastrointestinal tract, our collection contains only one species. Two hundred fifty-five of 324 examined specimens occurred in the posterior half of the gut, usual site of infec-

tion for kathlanid nematodes. Presumably, postmortem wandering accounts for their observed distribution. Of those 324 worms examined, 280 (86.4%) were mature and only 44 (13.6%) immature. The ratio of male worms to female worms was 118:206 or approximately 36:64%. The nematodes were identified as *Kathlania leptura* on the basis of the following traits. General: body up to 13 mm long in males, 15 mm in females, with finely tapering tail. Mouth with three well-defined lips each divided into a main lobe and 4–7 accessory lobes; buccal capsule present. Excretory pore located immediately anterior to level of esophageal bulb. Precloacal sucker lacking chitinous rim. Males: 11 pairs of lateral caudal papillae plus single medial papilla immediately precloacal. Lateral papillae arranged in groups as follows: 3 pairs posterolateral to cloaca, 2 pairs lateral to cloaca, 3 pairs immediately anterolateral to cloaca, 3 lateral pairs evenly spaced from level of precloacal sucker to slightly anterior to level of gubernaculum. Gubernaculum protruding, complex, V-shaped ventrally and ending posteriorly in 2 horns from which thin cuticular membranes extend anteriorly, surrounding the spicules. Spicules up to 550  $\mu\text{m}$  long by 60  $\mu\text{m}$  wide, similar and equal, with broad asymmetrical wings which are wider ventrally than dorsally. Females: Vulva postequatorial, with up to 15 ventral transverse crests immediately postvulvar. Eggs 90  $\mu\text{m}$  long by 45  $\mu\text{m}$  wide.

*Kathlania leptura* has been reported in *Chelonia mydas* (L.), *Caretta caretta* (L.), and *Thalassochelys* sp. (=either *Caretta caretta* or *Lepidochelys olivacea*) (Skrjabin et al., 1964, loc. cit.). Thus, *Lepidochelys olivacea* has never been listed as host explicitly and this report represents a new host record. However, *L. olivacea* is far more common than *Chelonia mydas* in the vicinity of Ceylon (Deraniyagala, 1939, Tetrapod Reptiles of Ceylon, vol. 1, Colombo Museum, Colombo) so it is possible that the report of *K. leptura* from *C. mydas* in Ceylon (Lane, 1914, Ind. J. Med. Res. 2:655) actually referred to specimens collected in *L. olivacea* incorrectly identified as *C. mydas*. This mistake in host identification has not been uncommon in the region (see Theobald, 1868, Catalogue of Reptiles in the Museum of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, extra number of J. Asiat. Soc., 88 pp.).

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DANIEL R. BROOKS  
Department of Zoology  
University of British Columbia  
2075 Wesbrook Mall  
Vancouver  
British Columbia  
Canada V6T 1W5

JACK FRAZIER  
Department of Zoological Research  
National Zoological Park  
Smithsonian Institution  
Washington, D.C. 20008