

## NEW RECORDS OF SEA ANEMONES (CNIDARIA, ANTHOZOA, ACTINIARIA) FROM NAMUNCURÁ-BURDWOOD BANK MARINE PROTECTED AREA I, AREA II AND ADJACENT AREAS

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### INTRODUCTION & AIM

The Namuncurá-Banco Burdwood Marine Protected Area (MPA) is the first one on the Argentine Continental Shelf. It is a plateau with depths ranging from 50 to 4000 meters, characterized by high biodiversity and endemism. Sea anemones (Actiniaria) are key components of benthic communities, both due to their role in food chains and their close symbiotic relationships with other animals. Therefore, understanding their biodiversity in the N-BB MPA is essential for conservation decisions. Previous reports have identified at least 8 species of sea anemones inhabiting the MPA (Figure 1). This study aims to expand the knowledge about the anemone species present in the area.

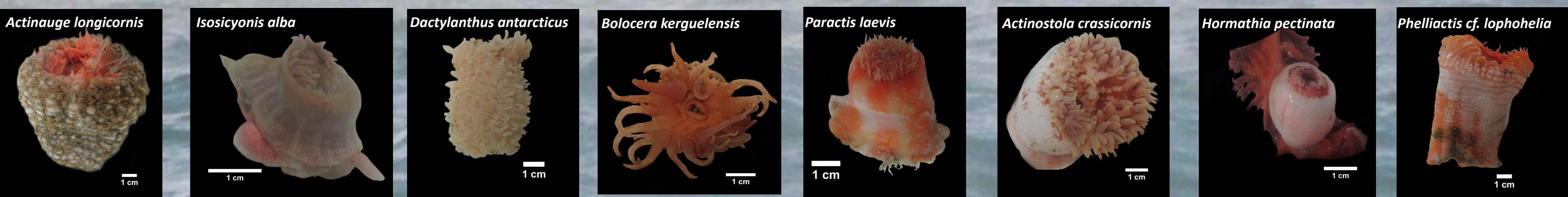


Figure 1: Sea anemone species recorded to date for the Namuncurá Banco Burdwood Marine Protected Area and surroundings.

### METHOD

Specimens collected during oceanographic campaigns to the Namuncurá-Banco Burdwood Marine Protected Area (MPA) aboard the BO A.R.A. Puerto Deseado in 2016 and 2017 were examined. Samples were obtained from a total of 20 stations, covering both the specific area of the MPA and surrounding zones. A total of 565 samples were collected across both campaigns. For the taxonomic identification of the species, their external and internal morphology, as well as their cnidome, were analyzed. Additionally, the acquisition of molecular data from the examined specimens is currently in progress, including mitochondrial markers (i.e., 12S, 16S, COX3) and nuclear markers (i.e., 18S, 28S).

### RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Eight species of sea anemones had previously been documented for the N-BB MPA. From this work, the species *Stomphia selaginella* and *Scytophorus striatus* are added to the list of species present in the area and surrounding zones (Figure 2). Additionally, the species *S. striatus* is recorded for the first time on the Argentine Continental Shelf, thus increasing the number of sea anemone species recorded in Argentine territory.

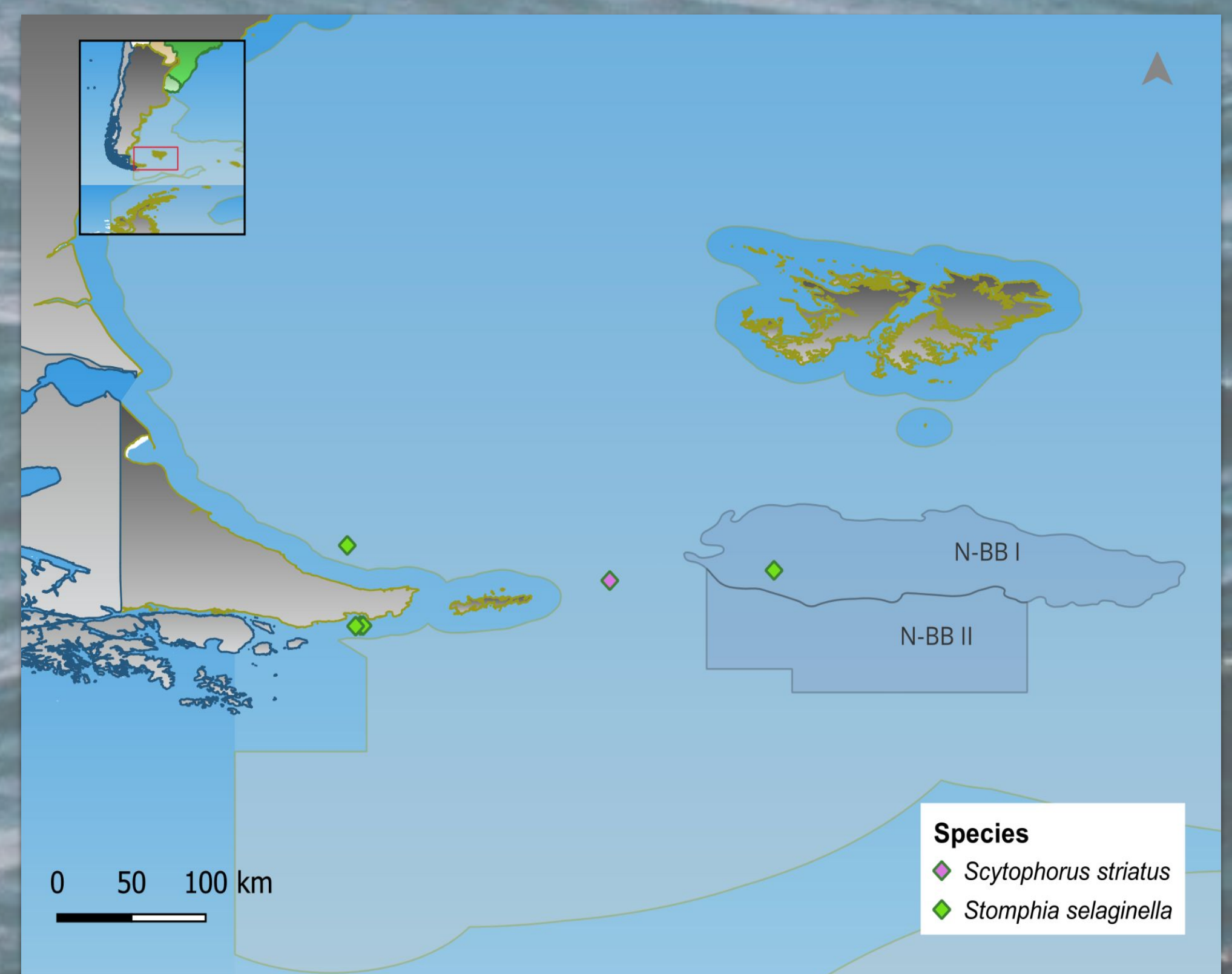
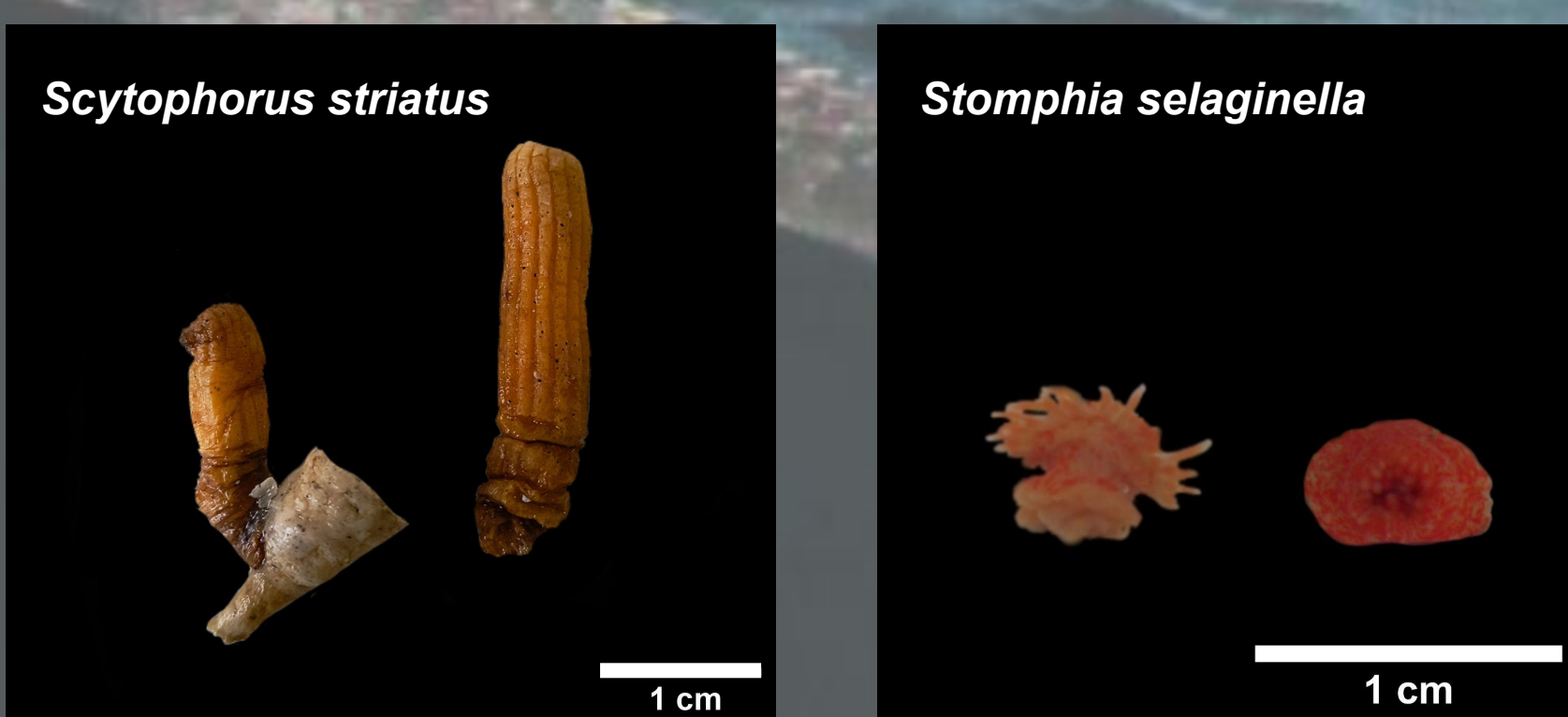


Figure 2: Map showing the distribution of specimens recorded for *Stomphia selaginella* and *Scytophorus striatus* in the AMP N-BB and surrounding areas.



### CONCLUSION

It is essential to continue species identification, as well as the analysis of their distributions and possible endemisms, to gain a deeper understanding of the biodiversity present in the N-BB MPA and the Argentine shelf, which is crucial for decision-making in terms of conservation.