

Octopus cleaned by two fish species at Fernando de Noronha Archipelago, SW Atlantic

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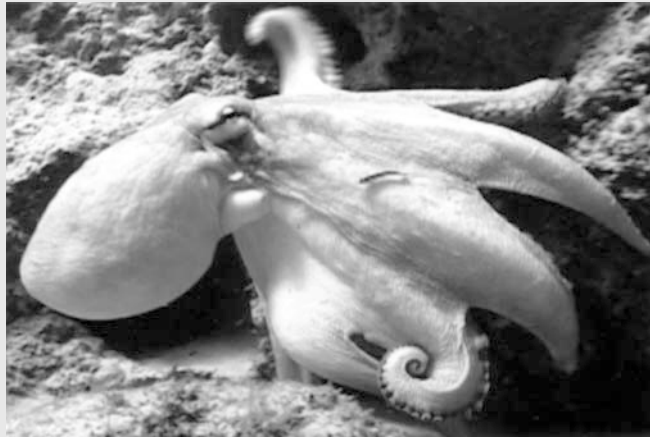


Fig. 1 The octopus *Octopus* cf. *vulgaris* cleaned by the goby *Elacatinus* cf. *randalli* while moving past a cleaning station at about 6-m depth (Fernando de Noronha Archipelago, May 2003)

Cleaning symbiosis in the sea involves a great range of species (Côté 2000), with a single record of an octopus cleaned by a fish (Johnson and Chase 1982). The authors report here on two instances of cleaning association between octopuses and cleaner fishes, both of them from a shipwreck site at the Fernando de Noronha Archipelago (03°50'S, 32°25'W) in northeast Brazil, SW Atlantic. In one record, an octopus (*Octopus* cf. *vulgaris*) moved past a cleaning station tended by the cleaner goby *Elacatinus* cf. *randalli*, a fish based on the substrate (Sazima and Moura 2000). As the octopus approached the station, the goby quickly swam towards it and inspected its mantle. The octopus paled during the cleaning (Fig. 1). After riding for about 2 m, the goby swam back to the station. In the second record, the octopus moved directly towards a station tended by the wrasse *Thalassoma noronhanum*, a fish that cleans in the water column (Francini-Filho et al. 2000). Settled atop a small promontory, the octopus darkened and paled while 10–12 fish nibbled at its skin. After 4 s, the octopus left the station. We suggest that the record

scarcity of octopuses at cleaning stations may be due to the very transient nature of the interaction plus the octopus' legendary cryptic behavior.

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