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Molecular and morphological studies of *Streptochilus* from the Arabian Sea

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Specimens of the biserial planktonic foraminiferal genus *Streptochilus* were collected 540 nautical miles offshore in the central Arabian Sea during the summer monsoon of 2003. Samples were collected from 5m water depth in waters with an average depth of 3,500 metres. All living specimens had bright orange coloured cytoplasm and sizes ranged from juvenile to fully mature. Ancestral relationships were determined by comparing their small subunit ribosomal DNA sequences with related and morphologically similar taxa. Living benthic foraminifers are commonly found suspended in the plankton in high energy turbulent waters, particularly over shallow shelf regions. Expatriation into the open ocean may also occur providing turbulence is sufficient to keep them in suspension. Using molecular, morphological and ecological evidence, we explore whether *Streptochilus* is solely planktonic in habit, whether it exploits both planktonic and benthic habitats during its life cycle or whether it is an expatriated benthic form from the shelf regions of the Arabian Sea.