

**AN OUTLINE OF THE SYSTEMATICS AND CLASSIFICATION OF  
NUDIBRANCHIA (GASTROPODA, OPISTHOBRANCHIA)**

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**ABSTRACT**

The Nudibranchia (Mollusca: Gastropoda: Opisthobranchia) is the largest order within the Opisthobranchia. The total number of species is presently estimated to be about 2000 in the Indo-Pacific, of which more than 30% may be undescribed. Nudibranchs are carnivores and most species are dietary specialists. Porifera, Cnidaria and Bryozoa are the most common prey organisms. Nudibranchs are usually brightly coloured and attractive for SCUBA divers. Current classification subdivides the Nudibranchia into four suborders, Doridacea, Arminacea, Dendronotacea, and Aeolidacea. Recent studies involving molecular methods and cladistic analysis indicate that these are not all monophyletic and that classification will have to be changed. In the present study the four suborders and the families included are characterised, and some representatives for each suborder are illustrated.