

FIRST RECORD OF A CRAB, *PORTUNUS PUBESCENS* (DANA) FROM
INDIAN COASTS (CRUSTACEA : DECAPODA : PORTUNIDAE)

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ABSTRACT

The specimen of *Portunus pubescens* (Dana) 1852, is recorded herewith for the first time from Sagar Island, Bay of Bengal and Tamil Nadu Coast, its diagnostic features are discussed with suitable illustrations.

INTRODUCTION

During faunistic surveys of Tamil Nadu Coast and Sagar Island, Bay of Bengal, few specimens of swimming crab, *Portunus pelagicus* (Dana) were collected and the literature revealed that the species has not been reported so far from the Indian Coasts.

As the original description of the species is inadequate and without any illustrations, its subsequent records were also in the same way, a brief description of this species is presented in this paper.

Previous records of the species were from Sandwich Island, Australia, Hawaii and Japan.

Order : DECAPODA

Family : PORTUNIDAE

Genus *Portunus*

Portunus pubescens (Dana)

(Pl. II, Fig. 1)

Lupa pubescens Dana 1852 : 274

Achelous pubescens, A. M. Edwards 1861 : 342

Portunus pubescens, Rathbun 1906 : 870 ; Edmondson
1954 : 237

Neptunus pubescens, Sakai 1934 : 303

Neptunus (Neptunus) pubescens, Sakai 1939 : 388

Portunus pubescens Sakai 1965 : 117

Material examined : One male from Mandapam, Tamil Nadu ; coll. Dr. P. K. Talwar, on 22.1.1974, 1 ♂, Width—36 mm. Length—20 mm. Front : 5 mm. 3 exs from Sagar Island, Bay of Bengal on 6.7.1977.

Diagnosis: Carapace very broad at the level of the last antero-lateral teeth, which is three times longer than the preceding teeth. Shape of carapace broadly oval, it is moderately convex medially on both the directions. The entire crab is covered dorsally with soft hairs and sharp minute granules present on epibranchial regions. The front cut into four obtuse teeth, the middle two are slightly narrower and longer than the outer pair. Inner infra orbital tooth visible dorsally, supra orbital edge cut by two fissures.

The antero-lateral teeth are nine, acuminate, their spineous tips directed anteriorly except the last teeth. The last one is prominent, directed horizontally, strong, spine like and three times larger than the former. A slightly raised granular line from the last antero-lateral teeth crossed the carapace transversely and divide the carapace into anterior and posterior half. One similarly disposed short line present in front of the former line. The posterior border of carapace is smooth and form a common curve with the postero-lateral borders.

Antero-external angle of merus of external maxillipeds rounded but not much produced

laterally, the entire merus is covered with soft hairs.

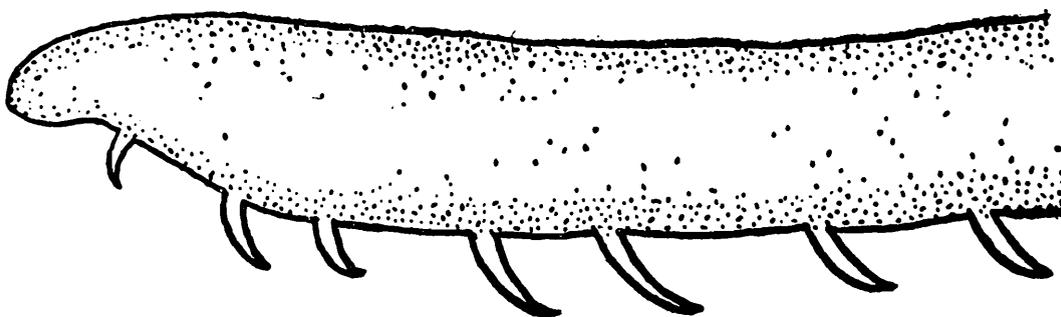
Chelipeds long, equal, arm, with three spines on the anterior border but without any on the posterior border. Wrist has a long spine at the inner corner and two spinules on the outer surface, besides there are two tubercles also at the end of coastae. Both the wrist and palm are coastate, seven smooth coastae present on palm, the upper two parallel ridge along the dorsal surface, each ending in a sharp spine. Fingers costate, shorter than the palm.

Edges of carpus, propodus and dactylus of walking legs thickly fringed with soft hairs along the borders.

Male abdomen five jointed, lateral sides of 4th joint straightly convergent.

Anterior male pleopod long, narrow, curved process apex bent outwardly.

Remarks: The crab is unlike the other known Indian species of the genus *Portunus* in the following respects—the dorsal surface of the entire crab, pterygostomian regions, surface of merus of external maxillipeds are covered with soft, yellowish, short hairs.



♂ 1 mm.

Fig. 1. Anterior male pleopod

The proportional length of the last antero-lateral spines which gives a particular shape to the species unlike other species of the genus. The number of spines on the chelipeds, are also unlike others, same is the case with male abdomen, as anterior pleopod which are very specific in the case of *P. pubescens* Dana.

Distribution : Bay of Bengal, Mandapam, Tamilnadu Coast (First record from India) ; Japan ; Hawii, Sandwitch Is. and Australia.

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PLATE II

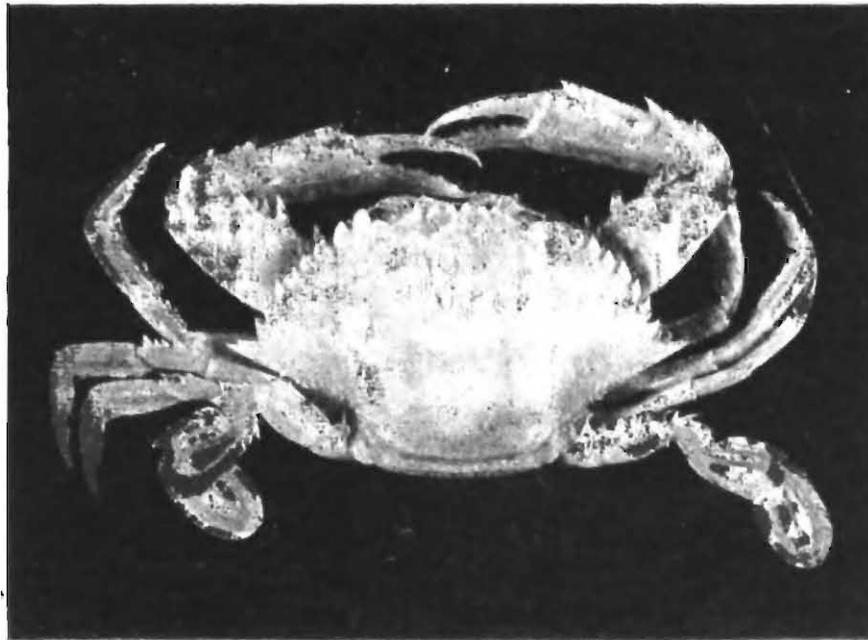


Fig. 1. *Portunus pubescens* (Dana)