

A NEW GENUS AND SPECIES OF PORTUNID CRAB :  
CRUSTACEA FROM NORTH ANDAMAN

By

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ABSTRACT

In this paper *Neothalamita triangularis*, a new genus and new species belonging to the family Portunidae, collected from Port Cornwallis, North Andaman, India, is described. Characters for differentiating it from its closely allied genera are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

On examination of the crab collection made by Dr. K. K. Tiwari (1959) from North Andaman, I came across two male specimens of portunid crabs with many marked differences from the known genera and species of the family Portunidae. They are therefore being accommodated in a new genus and species which are described below.

SYSTEMATIC ACCOUNT

CLASS : CRUSTACEA

ORDER : DECAPODA

Family : PORTUNIDAE Rafinesque, 1815.

Subfamily : PORTUNIDAE Rafinesque, 1815.

*Neothalamita*, gen. nov.,

*Description of male* : Carapace distinctly triangular, front broad, almost straight, sharp, blade like, four lobed and well separated from inner supra orbital angle. Lateral sides of the carapace strongly convergent,

anterolateral sides armed with three spines, including outer orbital angle. Carapace, smooth, polished, regions ill defined, transverse ridges smooth, faint. Orbits large, cup-like, edges sharp, finely crenulate, two sutures on upper and two on lower edge present. Antennules transversely folded ; antenna excluded from the orbital hiatus ; basal antennal crests are two, granular parallel ridges. Epistome broad, efferent branchial canals distinct. Buccal cavern wider forward, broader than long, its adjoining areas towards front are finely granular. Chelipeds unequal, stout, palm smooth not costate, twice as long as high ; fingers curved, shorter than palm, tips broad and fluted. Legs compressed, spiny and sparsely hairy. Male abdomen 5 jointed, 3-5 terge fused.

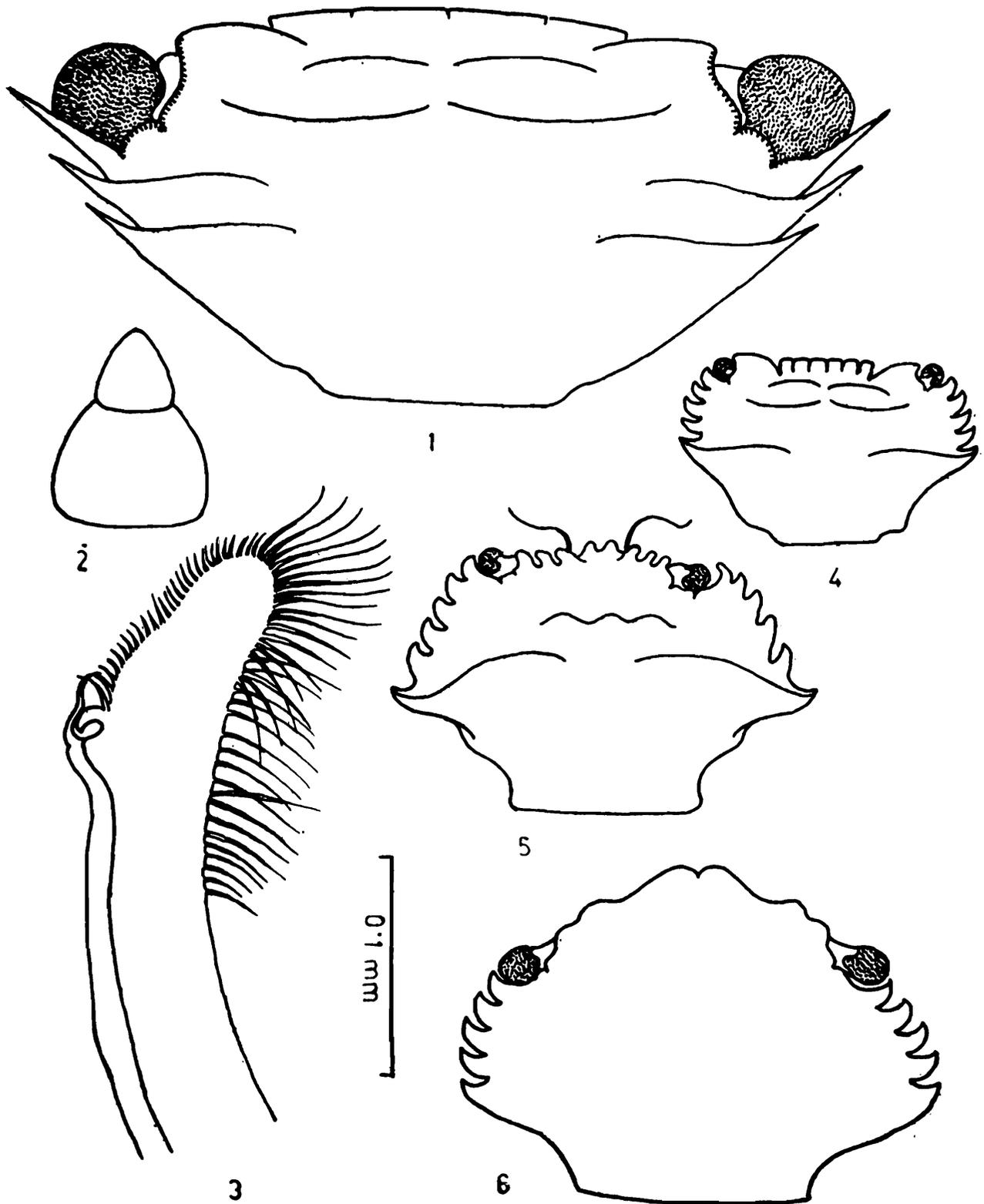
*Remarks* : Triangular carapace, with oblique, convergent sides, and presence of only three anterolateral spines differentiate this genus from *Thalamita* Latr. 1829, and other allied genera. The table on page

TABLE

<i>Neothalamita</i>	<i>Thalamita</i>	<i>Thalamonyx</i>	<i>Charybdis</i>
1. Carapace :—	1. Carapace :—	1. Carapace :—	1. Carapace ;—
(i) Triangular in shape,	(i) Hexagonal in shape,	(i) Subcircular in shape	(i) Broad, hexagonal in shape
(ii) Front very broad, straight & four lobed,	(ii) Front broad, straight 2 or 4 or 6 lobed,	(ii) Front not so broad, convex bilobed,	(ii) Front not so broad, slightly convex, 6 lobed.
(iii) Antro-lateral sides of carapace convergent, with three spines, & in 45° angle with front.	(iii) Ant. Lat. sides of carapace parallel, with 4-5 spines, & 90° or more angular with front.	(iii) Ant. Lat. side of carapace convex with 5 spines & in 135° angle with front.	(iii) Ant. Lat. sides of carapace divergent, convex, with 6 spines & in 135° degree angle with front.
2. Chelipeds unequal, palm not costate, finger tips broad, fluted.	2. Chelipeds almost equal, palm costate, finger tips pointed.	2. Chelipeds almost equal, palm costate, finger tips pointed.	2. Chelipeds almost equal, palm costate finger tips pointed
3. Walking legs—	3. Walking legs—	3. Walking leg—	3. Walking legs—
(i) All the merii with a spine on lower distal corner.	(i) Only merus of the last leg with a spine on lower distal corner.	(i) Merii of 1st three pairs without spines, of last pair with a spine on lower distal corner	(i) Merii of last two pairs only spinate on lower distal corner.
(ii) All the carpal joints with dorsal spine	(ii) No spine on carpus	(ii) No spine on carpus	(ii) No spine on carpus
(iii) Propodus of 1st three pairs with a spine on lower distal corner, of last pair, with 7 spinules	(iii) Propodus of 1st three pairs without spines, of last pair with several spinules in few species only	(iii) No spine on propodus of 1st three pairs and perhaps on last pair also.	(iii) No spine on propodus of 1st three pairs, several spinules present on the propodus of last pair of some species only.
(iv) Dactylus of first three pairs with rows of spines, of last pair minutely spinate posteriorly.	(i.) Dactylus spineless for first three pairs, of last pair may or may not be spinate posteriorly	(iv) Dactylus spineless for first three pairs, of last pair perhaps spineless, Alcock did not mention about spines.	(iv) Dactylus spineless for first three pairs, of last pair, may or may not be spinulate posteriorly.

below expresses the differences the new genus has, from other allied portunid genera.

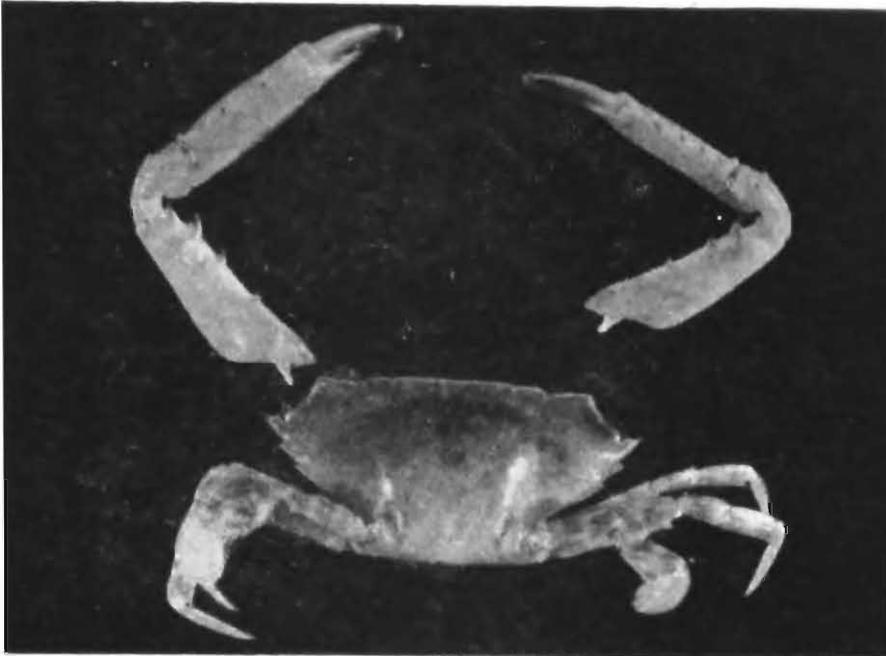
Type Species : *Neothalamita triangularis* sp. nov. ( Figs. 1-3 )



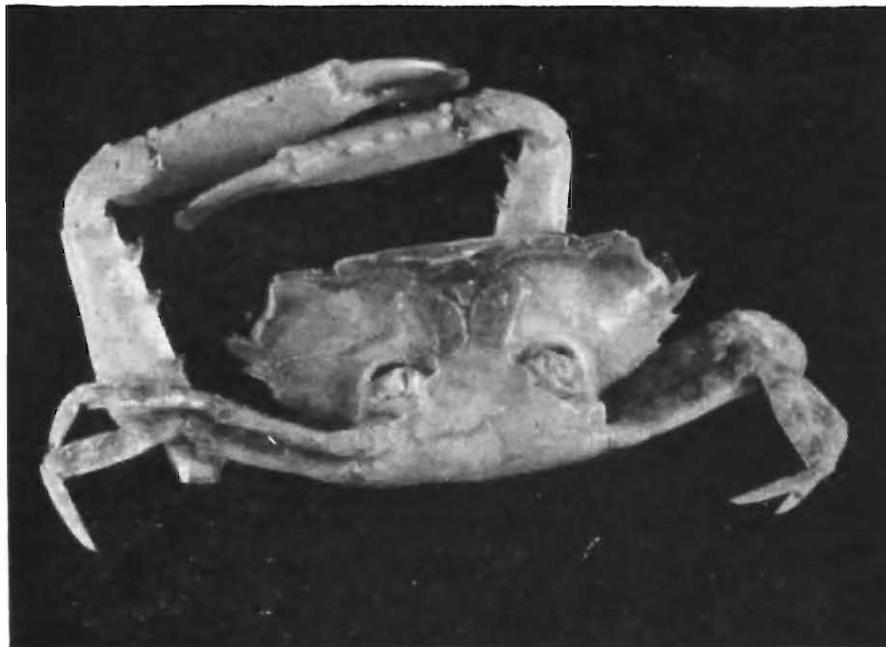
Figs. 1. *Neothalamita*, 2. same, last two somites of male abdomen, 3. same, anterior male pleopod, 4. *Thalamita*, 5. *Charybdis*, 6. *Thalamonyx*.

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PLATE I



1



2

Figs. 1-2. 1. *Neothalamita triangularis* Deb. (Dorsal view).  
2. Same, (Ventral view).

**Material :** Holotype : 1 male, width-20 mm ; Length-9 mm ; Front-10 mm Front including supra orbital lobes-15 mm ; Posterior border-6 mm : Z. S. I. Regd. No. C 2789/2.

**Paratype :** 1 male ; W-13 mm ; L-7 mm ; F-6 mm ; Z. S. I. Regd No. C 2790/2. Both the males were collected from Port Cornwallis, North Andaman, on 3.2.1959 by Dr. K. K. Tiwari.

**Description of male :** Carapace triangular, slightly convex medially in both directions. Region ill defined, surface smooth, crossed transversely by faint smooth ridges. Lateral sides of carapace strongly convergent and its anterior part armed with three strong spines, including the outer orbital angle. The spines decreasing in size from before backwards, their tips are brown in colour. Front half of the greatest width of carapace, slightly convex and sharp, smooth, cut into four, broad, square lobes by fine sutures, the outer pair is slightly narrower than the inner pair. Upper supra-orbital lobe well separated from the front, slanting inward and broad. Orbits large, cup-like, edge sharp and finely crenulate. Two distinct notches present on the upper and two on the lower edges. Eyes large and on the thick, short, stalk. Merus of external maxilliped broader than long, anterior edge slightly concave and its upper outer corner rounded, extended outwards.

Chelipeds unequal, stout, more than three times the length of carapace ; arm long, upper edge armed with four spines, sub-terminal one larger, claw like and curved. Lower edge and other proximal sides of arm rough. Wrist armed with a prominent spine

on its inner corner and on outer side with two spinules and one tubercle in a row, parallel to its distal end, surface of wrist otherwise smooth. Palm tumid, smooth, its length twice of its height. Upper edge of palm armed with four spines and a distal tubercle in a row. Another row of spinules, very close to the upper row towards its outer side, present, the distal spinule of this row is tubercular and the proximal one is near the wrist. Tips of all the spines and spinules are brown coloured. Fingers short, about half of the palm in length, surface grooved, polished, tips broad and fluted. Cutting edges of curved fingers dentate and leaves a narrow gap when apposed. Leg joints compressed, merus narrow, upper edge sharply granular and lower distal corner armed with a spine. Upper distal corner of all the carpal joints and lower distal corners of the propodus of first three pairs of legs ends in a large spine. The foliaceous propodus of only last pair of legs armed with seven spinules on its posterior edge. Dactylus of first three pairs spiny, styliform, stout and of last pair typically foliaceous for swimming. Only the legs are with sparse bristles. Sixth segment of the male abdomen broader than long and its sides are gently curved and convergent distally, seventh segment triangular in shape. Anterior male pleopod a long, stout, curved and grooved process, the process broader and somewhat triangular distally. Apex broadly rounded, inner sub apical area adorned with short, small and spinous bristles, while the outer side fringed with long, thick bristles.

**Colour :** Dirty grey colour owing to the presence of very fine black dots, leg joints adorned with black and white bands. Cutting edges of fingers and their distal one third

dark brown in colour. Finger tips white and all the spines are brown tipped.

*Remarks* : *Neothalamita triangularis* Deb is distinctive because of its triangular shape ; presence of only three anterolateral spines ; very wide and four lobed sharp front. Cup-like, large, oval orbit with thick, short, stalked, large eyes ; broad, fluted finger tips and spinous dactylus of legs are also unlike other species of the allied genera.

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