THE REDISCOVERY OF MACROPTHALMUS (MACROPTHALMUS) LAEVIS A. MILNE EDWARDS, 1867, IN THE ARABIAN SEA (DECAPODA BRACHYURA)

BY

NASIMA M. TIRMIZI and NASEEM GHANI
Marine Reference Collection, Zoology Department, University of Karachi, Karachi 32, Pakistan

RÉSUMÉ

Macrophthalmus (Macrophthalmus) laevis A. Milne Edwards, 1867 du Pakistan est signalé pour la première fois depuis sa description. Les deux sexes ont été obtenus; l'espèce est brièvement décrite et une note sur son identité est fourni.

The present paper is a part of much larger programme of the taxonomic studies being undertaken by the Marine Reference Collection Centre (MRCC). The brachyuran crabs of Pakistan, for the sake of convenience, are being studied as brachyrhynchan crabs and those other than the brachyrhynchan crabs. A monograph on 47 species of the latter group is ready for press (Tirmizi & Kazmi), the brachyrhynchan crabs of which 90 species have been identified, are under study. Since the work will take several years before it is completed, it seems advisable to publish interesting observations in the form of short papers. The present paper is based on the occurrence of Macrophthalmus (Macrophthalmus) laevis A. Milne Edwards, in Pakistani waters. The two sexes were collected for the first time, a short description of the species and remarks on identification are given below. Part of the material is housed in the Zoological Survey Department of Pakistan (ZSD).

Macrophthalmus (Macrophthalmus) laevis A. Milne Edwards, 1867 (figs. 1-11)

Macrophthalmus (Macrophthalmus) ressli Pretzmann, 1971: 482, pl. 9 fig. 23.

Material and measurements. — P.N.S. Himalaya, near Karachi, Pakistan; mangroves, 15.10.1981, 4 σσ, cb. 25-26 mm, cl. 14.0-14.5 mm; 1 Φ, cb. 21.5 mm, cl. 12.5 mm (MRCC).
Korangi Creek near Karachi; mangroves, 20.9.1983, 1 Φ, berried, cb. 22.0 mm, cl. 13.0 mm (MRCC); 8.10.1983, 19 σσ, cb. 18.5-30.0 mm, cl. 10.5-16.5 mm; 1 Φ, berried, cb. 26.2 mm, cl. 14.5 mm; 10 σσ, cb. 22.0-27.0 mm, cl. 13.0-15.0 mm; 2.11.1983, 1 Φ, berried, cb. 22.0 mm, cl. 12.5 mm (ZSD).
Baba Island, near Karachi; 30.8.1962, 1 σ, cb. 30.0 mm, cl. 17.0 mm (ZSD).
Descriptive remarks. — A. Milne Edwards described *Macrophthalmus laevis* in 1867 for two female specimens collected from "la mer des Indes". The original description being brief, this species was largely ignored (see Tesch, 1915) and its identity remained obscure. Pretzmann (1971) described *Macrophthalmus (Macrophthalmus) ressli* for two male specimens from the mouth of the Persian Gulf. Barnes (1976) studied the photographs of A. Milne Edwards’ specimens and the paratype of Pretzmann’s species. According to him *M. laevis* and *M. (M.) ressli* appeared identical. The correct identity of *M. laevis*, however, depended on the discovery of male specimens. Barnes (1976: 144) stated that the identity of *M. laevis* will never be known since "the association of male and female specimens must be conjunctural in view of the sexual dimorphism displayed by this genus".

In 1981 five specimens of *M. (M.) laevis*, four males and one berried female, were obtained from P.N.S. Himalaya (near Karachi). Several specimens of *M. (M.) laevis*, housed in the Survey Department are also available for study.

The specimens at hand agree quite well with the description given by Barnes, 1976. A brief account of the species is, however, given below to supplement the existing descriptions.

The carapace (fig. 1) is broader than long, and the regions are well marked. The dorsal surface of the carapace is covered with microscopic granules. The lateral margins are each with three teeth, the first tooth is large, broad and directed anteriorly, the second is larger than the first, giving the carapace its maximum breadth; the third tooth is small and obscure. The front is narrow, the epistome is with a central protuberance. The ocular peduncles do not reach beyond the external orbital angles, the outer orbital margin (fig. 2) is more pronouncedly denticulate.

The third maxilliped (fig. 3) is operculate with the ischium much larger than the merus.

The male chelipeds (figs. 4, 5) are equal and stouter than the legs, their surfaces are finely granular. The ischiom shows one small denticle on the inner margin and 1 or 2 on the outer margin. The outer margin of the merus is armed with pointed tubercles and a row of plumose hairs on the proximal half; the upper and lower inner margins are each armed with spines which increase distally and are continued on the distal margin, there is a row of brown, stiff setae subparallel to the inner, upper margin, the surfaces are with hairs arranged in rows or tufts, as illustrated (fig. 4). The outer margin of the carpus has fine granules; the inner surface is armed with a group of large spines, placed towards the middle and articulating with a group of spines on the palm, another group of spines and small tubercles are placed towards the inner margin, and a spine is present between these two groups; the outer and inner margins of the palm are with pointed granules which are quite prominent proximally; on the inner surface, and situated near the base, is a group of spines consisting of one large, and several small spines and accumulate tubercles,