A NEW SPECIES OF PHYLLODIAPTOMUS KIEFER (COPEPODA, CALANOIDA) FROM THE SHATT AL-ARAB RIVER, SOUTHERN IRAQ

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ABSTRACT

A new species of the genus Phyllodiaptomus Kiefer, 1936, is herein described as Phyllodiaptomus irakiensis sp. nov. from the Shatt al-Arab River, southern Iraq. The species is closely similar to Phyllodiaptomus blanci (Guerne & Richard, 1889), but can be distinguished from that species by the left metasomal wing in the female, the second and third urosomal somites each having a conspicuous hyaline lobe on the dorsal side, the presence of fine hairs at the outer and inner margins of the furcal rami, and the structure of the fifth pair of legs in both sexes; moreover, the anal segment along with the furcal rami in the male are curved to the right inner side of the main axis of the urosome, in addition to differences noticed in the right antennule, etc. The new species is the eleventh member of the genus (cf. Sanoamuang & Teeramaethee, 2006) and the second species recorded from southern Iraq.

INTRODUCTION

A surface plankton sample was collected from the Shatt al-Arab River opposite the town of Al-Faw, southern Iraq (fig. 1) on 28 April 2005, as a part of the monthly plankton monitoring project on the Shatt al-Arab River and its branches.

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A distinct species of diaptomid copepod was recognized in the sample, with males outnumbering females. A critical examination of both sexes of this species indicates that, in spite of some close similarities to *Phylldiaptomus blanci* (Guerne & Richard, 1889) [generic allocation *blanci* according to Kiefer, 1978], that it possesses certain unique morphological features, justifying the recognition of a new species, here described under the name of *Phylldiaptomus irakiensis* sp. nov.

Previous investigations on the freshwater zooplankton of southern Iraq were done mainly on selected groups, like Cladocera (cf. Khalaf & Smirnov, 1976), and Rotifera (cf. Abdul-Hussein et al., 1988), while Al-Saboonchi et al. (1986) referred to copepods as a minor group, represented by 6 cyclopoid species. The brackish and marine copepods of Iraq were earlier studied by the present author (Khalaf, 1988, 1991, 1992, 1994; Khalaf & Ajeel, 1994).