FIRST REPORT OF DOTILLID CRABS (DECAPODA, BRACHYURA) FROM THE NORTHERN GULF OF OMAN, IRAN

BY

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ABSTRACT

Three species of dotillid crabs, Dotilla blanfordi Alcock, 1900, Ilyoplax frater (Kemp, 1919), and Scopimera crabicauda Alcock, 1900, which were collected in 2009 and 2010 from intertidal zones on the coasts of the province of Sistan and Baluchistan, Iran, are new records for the northern Gulf of Oman. The diagnostic characteristics of these species were examined and are reported upon in this paper.

RÉSUMÉ

Trois espèces de crabes Dotillidae, Dotilla blanfordi Alcock, 1900, Ilyoplax frater (Kemp, 1919), et Scopimera crabicauda Alcock, 1900, qui ont été collectés en 2009 et 2010 dans les zones intertidales des côtes de la province de Sistan et Baluchistan, Iran, constituent de nouveaux signalements pour le nord du golfe d’Oman. Les caractéristiques diagnostiques de ces espèces sont examinées et exposées dans cet article.

INTRODUCTION

Dotillid crabs (Brachyura, Dotillidae) include 59 species worldwide, nearly half of which are in the genus Ilyoplax (cf. De Grave et al., 2009). Two genera, Scopimera and Dotilla, are collected from sand pellets on sandy beaches across the tropical and subtropical Indo-Pacific. Some dotillid crabs have a tympanum on the meri of some or most of P2-P5 and this structure helps them breathe air (Ng et al., 2008). The third maxillipeds in this family are large and cover most of the buccal cavity, a taxonomically useful character (Ng et al., 2008).

So far, few taxonomic studies have been conducted on crabs along the Iranian coasts of the Persian Gulf (Stephensen, 1945; Apel & Spiridonov, 1998; Naderloo

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& Sari, 2007) and the northern Gulf of Oman (Stephensen, 1945; Yazdani et al., 2008). Apel (2001) provides the most recent treatise on the taxonomy and zoogeography of brachyurans in the Persian Gulf. That author (Apel, 2001) identified 5 species of dotillid crabs from the Persian Gulf and 2 species of this family from the Gulf of Oman on the Arabian side, those latter comprising *Dotilla sulcata* (Forskal, 1775) and *Scopimera crabicauda* Alcock, 1900. Stephensen (1945) identified 2 species of this family only from the Persian Gulf and Yazdani et al. (2008) did not report any dotillid crabs in their article. The objective of the present study therefore is, to report three species of dotillid crabs for the first time from the northern Gulf of Oman, Iranian side, with a description of their relevant morphological characters.

**MATERIAL AND METHODS**

During 2009 and 2010, specimens of crabs were collected in the intertidal zones along the coasts of the Gulf of Oman, province of Sistan and Baluchistan, Iran, at 10 stations (fig. 1) by hand and dip-net. Specimens were preserved in 70% ethanol.

![Fig. 1. Map of sampling areas along the Iranian coasts of the Gulf of Oman, Province of Sistan and Baluchistan.](image-url)