

## A rare deepwater Japanese blunt-thorn lobster *Palinustus waguensis* Kubo, 1963 (Decapoda: Palinuridae) found off Mangalore coast, Central West Coast of India

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Present study reports the record of occurrence of *Palinustus waguensis* in the Arabian Sea after a gap of 45 years since its first report in 1965. A single specimen measuring 150 mm (total length) was collected in a Multiday trawler, which was operating south of Mangalore in the Arabian Sea off the south-west coast of India. The present record of this species from the Arabian Sea shows the extended range of occurrence around the peninsular coast of India.

[**Key words:** *Palinustus waguensis*, blunt-thorn lobster, Arabian Sea]

### Introduction

Blunt-thorn lobster genus *Palinustus* is having five species viz., *Palinustus holthuisi* Chan & Yu, 1995, *Palinustus mossambicus* Barnard, 1926, *Palinustus truncates* A. Milne-Edwards, 1880, *Palinustus unicornutus* Berry, 1979, *Palinustus waguensis* Kubo, 1963 and widely distributed in Indo-West pacific, FAO fishing areas 51,57, 61 and 71, Sagami Bay, Honshu Island. The type locality of this particular species is from Wagu, mie prefecture, Honshu region of Japan<sup>1</sup>.

### Materials and Methods

On 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2011 a single male individual of *P. waguensis* weighing 70 g was landed by a multiday trawler, which was operating south of Mangalore at 80 metres depth (Fig. 1). The specimen was fresh and the colouration was reddish. Anterior margin of carapace and inner margin of the frontal horns with several distinct spines<sup>2</sup>. Total length, carapace length and tail width was recorded as 150 mm, 49 mm and 50 mm respectively. Ratio of carapace length to total length of *P. waguensis* was 0.32, which is similar to the records of Kizhakudan and Thirumilu, 2006.

### Results and Discussion

George in 1965 recorded this species as *Palinustus mossambicus* Barnard, which was obtained from the regurgitated stomach content of *Epinephelus diacanthus*, fished from Calicut region down south of Mangalore. Kurian and Sebastian, 1982 indicated that the species *P. mossambicus* was obtained in large numbers from certain localities in India without giving specifics. In 2006, Kizhakudan and Thirumilu, Lakshmi and Thirumilu collected 42 specimens of *P. waguensis* with size ranging from 32 mm to 75 mm carapace length from Chennai coast on the East coast of India. Since 1965, this is the report of occurrence of *P. waguensis* from Central West Coast after a gap of 45 years. The same latitudinal distribution of this species in Chennai on east coast and Mangalore on west coast throws more light on the distributional range and latitudinal diversity around peninsular Indian coast and there is considerable population dispersal occurred over a period of time, since its first report. The taxonomic ambiguity between *P. waguensis* vis a vis *P. mossambicus* requires closer scrutiny<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 2a & b).

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Fig. 1—*Palinustus waguensis* Kubo, 1963 recorded from Mangalore, Central West Coast of India

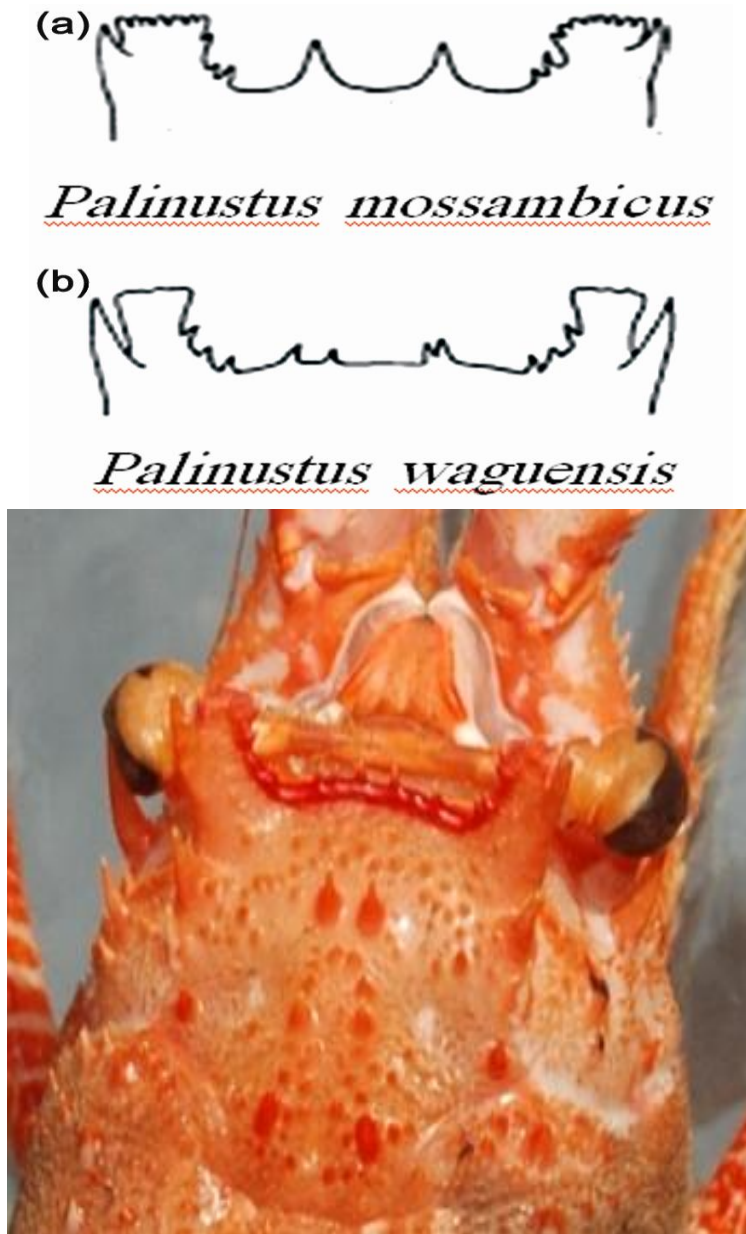


Fig 2—Dorsal view of anterior margin of carapace (a) Anterior margin of carapace between frontal horns with a single pair of strong sub median spines; rest of the margin as well as the inner margin of the horns unarmed or with 2 very small spinules..... *P. mossambicus*. (b) Anterior margin of carapace as well as inner margin of frontal horns with several distinct spines. Shallow water form..... *P. waguensis*

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