

A report on morphological abnormality in *Scylla serrata*

R. Ratheesh Kumar, Swapnil S. Tandel, Vaibhav D. Mhatre and Veerendra Veer Singh

Mumbai Research Centre of ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Mumbai

e-mail: ratheeshk14u2@gmail.com

Morphological abnormalities most commonly reported in crabs are alterations in carapace (mainly number and shape of antero-lateral teeth), chelipeds, walking legs and shape of the abdomen. Uran, a fishing village in Raigad district of Maharashtra, supports a good fishery of *Scylla serrata* commonly known as giant mud crab, found in the coastal estuarine and mangrove areas. During a survey conducted in the intertidal zone on 21st August 2017, a live juvenile of *S. serrata* was observed with a bifurcated claw. The crab was a male with 56 mm carapace width. Its right cheliped showed two claws articulating separately from the carpus and second claw emerged from the posterior side of the carpus. Merus of the right cheliped also showed strong rows of spines on both sides unlike in a normal crab. The two claws were well developed and resembled each other, except a slight difference in size.

The exact reason for the present abnormality is unknown. Certain authors have concluded that such abnormalities may be due to injuries or accidents (Shelton *et al.*, 1981, *J. Embryol Exp Morphol.*, 63: 285-304), infections (Primavera and Quinitio. 2000, *J. Crustacean Biol.*, 20(4): 796-802), mutation due



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to ionising radiations and toxins (Klein and Koomen. 1993, *Crustaceana*, 64(1): 122-126), or due to extreme environmental conditions (Pandourski and Evtimova, 2009, *Acta. Zool Bulg.*, 61(1): 55-67). Possible reason for the present abnormality may be due to injuries or accident in the chelate leg and its regeneration. Chelate legs are used by crabs mainly for defence/offence, which make it more vulnerable to injuries, autotomy and regeneration.