

**ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE CARIDEAN PRAWN *THALAS-*
SOCARIS LUCIDA (DANA) IN THE STOMACH OF *NEOTHUNNUS*
MACROPTERUS (TEMMINCK AND SCHLEGEL) FROM THE
ARABIAN SEA**

ON 8th January 1962, while on a regular research cruise of *R. V. VARUNA*, one specimen of a yellowfin tuna *Neothunnus macropterus* was caught on the trolling line from a medium-sized shoal sighted outside the continental shelf off Quilon. The specimen was a male measuring 68 cm. in total length. On examination of the stomach it was found to be gorged with small-sized shrimp along with a few other items such as 1 small *Caranx* sp., 6 squids and 3 semi-digested unidentifiable

fish. The total wet volume of the food items was 210 cc. of which more than 75% was formed by the shrimps. As the shrimps were in good condition with a most of the appendages intact it could be identified easily as belonging to the subfamily *Thalassocarinae* of the family *Pandalidae*.

***Thalassocaris lucida* (Dana)**

Thalassocaris lucida Kemp 1925 pp. 283-284 (with synonymy).

Material : Numerous specimens ranging in size from 14 mm. to 18 mm., from the stomach of *N. macropterus*.

Locality : The fish caught from the Arabian Sea, Southwest off Quilon—Lat. 08° 35' N. and Long. 76° 07' E.

Distinguishing characteristics : Rostrum is as long as carapace and in dorsal view widest at the base, although slight variations are seen in their dilation at the base. As in the allied species *T. crinita* (Dana) the lateral process of the antennule is crenulate. The antennal scale is as long as carapace with the base broadest and with 2 teeth on the outer edge. The second pair of pereopods does not reach end of antennal scale. Tuberculations are almost absent on the edges of merus of second walking leg. On the telson 2 or 3 pairs of spines are present behind the apex.

Distribution : The species has a wide distribution in the Indo-Pacific. It has been recorded from the Landrones (Marianas), Loo Choo Is., 27°30'N., 138°30'E. (South of Japan), South Seas, Fiji, Christmas Island, the Maldives and Saya de Malha.

The present observation of this species from the stomach of a fast moving fish like the tuna off Quilon suggests two possibilities; either the shrimps were fed upon at the Maldives area, the nearest locality from where these have been recorded, and the fish moved fast to reach this region, or they were taken in right around the locality where the fish was caught. The very fresh condition of the prawns from the stomach of the fish points to the latter possibility and hence this is reported as the first record of the species from the Arabian Sea.

The presence in large numbers of this prawn in the stomach contents of the tuna also indicates the importance of this prawn among the forage organisms of tunas and such other oceanic fish of the area.

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REFERENCE

KEMP, S. 1925. *Rec. Ind. Mus.* 27 : 249-343.