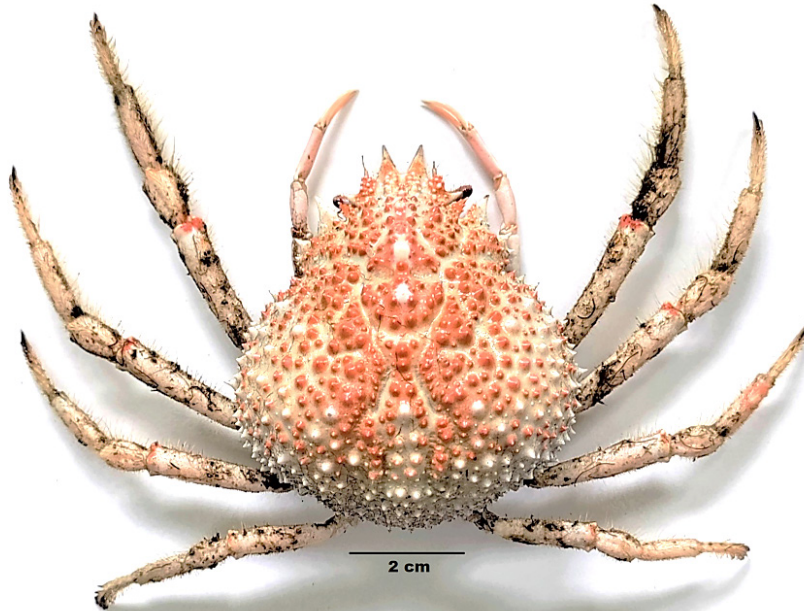


Report on spider crab *Paramaja* sp. from Southwest coast of India



Paramaja sp. adult female crab

Recently, a female specimen of the spider crab, *Paramaja* sp., belonging to the Majidae family was collected from Sakthikulangara Fisheries Harbour. *P. gibba* is reported from Andaman Sea, off Kollam and Gulf of Mannar. Earlier reports about this species mentions only male specimens recorded from Indian seas. Carapace pear-shaped, narrow anteriorly, posterior wider and convex. Dorsal surface of the carapace densely covered with pointed small to rounded

medium sized tubercles. The regions are well defined, branchial and cardiac regions are inflated and separated from the gastric region by prominent deep grooves. The basic colour of the dorsal carapace, chelate and ambulatory legs are creamish white; tubercles and their bases in the orbital, gastric, cardiac regions and distal part of merii of the ambulatory legs are bright orange. Rostrum bifurcated, prominent and 'V' shaped, orbital area surrounded by

spines; lateral spines small and only few moderately bigger/ longer. Chelates are slender, shorter and devoid of hairs; ambulatory legs relatively longer and hairy, reducing in length from first to fourth. Abdomen broad with six somites and a telson. Lateral and medial edges of the ambulatory legs, surface of the abdominal segments and base of the rostral spines are fringed with long and short hairs, visible clearly in the ventral view.

The collected female crab was in berried condition with a carapace length (CL) of 82 mm and total weight (TW) of 49.2 g. The presently procured specimen may belong to *P. gibba*, as various diagnostic characters observed were in agreement. However, to identify the species from its closely related species, *P. turgida* and *P. kominatoensis* and final species confirmation, the structure of the adult male pleopods must also be examined. The few male specimens collected along with the female crab, were in highly spoiled condition with only exoskeleton remaining. Hence, more numbers of male and female crabs are required to complete the species identification process.

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