



First report of two species of Leucosiid crabs of the genus *Arcania* (Crustacea: Brachyura: Leucosidae) from Karnataka coast, India

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Short Communication

Abstract

Two species of Leucosiid crabs of the genus *Arcania* were recorded from the Mangaluru coast of Karnataka. *Arcania gracilis* (Henderson, 1893) and *Arcania cornuta*, (MacGilchrist, 1905) have been reported all along the east coast and along Kerala in the west coast of India. This study reports the distribution of *A. gracilis* and *A. cornuta* along the Karnataka coast for the first time. The external characters were photographed and examined, and their taxonomic characteristics and distribution details are described briefly.

Keywords: *Leucosidae*, *Arcania gracilis*, *Arcania cornuta*, Karnataka, India, taxonomy

Introduction

Leucosiid crabs are commonly known as nut crabs or pebble crabs as they mimic small pebbles to conceal themselves in the sand and silty substrata along the littoral and marine habitats (Mohanty *et al.*, 2019). The highly polished carapace and thoracic sinus are unique identification features of these crabs (Poore, 2004). An Initial study on the Leucosiid crabs of India was done by Adams and White (1849), followed by Alcock (1895, 1896), who listed and described 83 species from their Royal Indian Marine Survey (RIMS) expedition. In addition, numerous studies have been conducted on the diversity of crabs inhabiting the Indian coastal waters (Chhapghar, 1957; Sankarankutty, 1965; Kakati, 1980; Sakai, 1983; Jeyabaskaran *et al.*, 2000; Roy and Nandi, 2008; Dineshbabu *et al.*, 2011; Sakthivel and Fernando, 2012; Pillai *et al.*, 2013; Kumar *et al.*, 2013). As per the report of Trivedi

et al. (2018), the highest number of species was recorded from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (588), while the smallest number was from Goa and Karnataka State (82). The records indicated that the east coast of India, with 803 species, is more diverse than the west coast, having only 446 species of brachyuran crabs. This study reports two species of crab of the genus *Arcania* from the Mangaluru coast of Karnataka, southeastern Arabian Sea.

Material and methods

Six specimens of *A. cornuta* and a single specimen of *A. gracilis* were collected from the by-catch landings of trawlers at Mangalore Fishing Harbour in 2022. These specimens were brought to the laboratory, cleaned, photographed and preserved in 7% formaldehyde for further observation. The specimens were examined morphometrically using Vernier Caliper (0.01 mm accuracy) and were identified and described following Galil (2001) and Naderloo (2017). The specimens were deposited at the Department of Fisheries Resources and Management, College of Fisheries, Mangaluru, Karnataka.

Systematics

Class : Malacostraca (Latreille)
Order : Decapoda (Latreille, 1802)
Family : Leucosiidae (Samouelle, 1819)
Genus : *Arcania* (Leach, 1817)

***Arcania gracilis* Henderson, 1893 (Fig. 1)**

Holotype information

Type locality: Off Madras coast, Andaman Sea (Martaban), India (Alcock and Anderson, 1894). The genus was revised by Galil (2001), who confirmed that the two Indian Ocean species, *Arcania quinquespinosa* Alcock and Anderson, 1894, and *A. gracilis* Henderson, 1893, are subjective synonyms.

Synonyms

Arcania septemspinosa *gracilis*- Henderson, 1893. *Arcania quinquespinosa*- Alcock and Anderson, 1894; recorded this species from the Persian Gulf. *Arcania quinquespinosa*-Stephensen, (1945); recorded from The Gulf of Oman, Iran, *Arcania gracilis*-Galil, 2001.

Material examined

One single female specimen of *A. gracilis* of carapace length 11.5 mm was collected by Ahamed Rasheeq and Sanjay Kumar from the trawl landings of Mangaluru fishing harbour (Table 1, Fig. 1).

Description

The carapace is rhomboidal, broadly conical in outer, wider than long, carapace pink coloured, with a large rectangular cardiac region, a large bright red ocellus in the dorsal region of the carapace surrounded by rectangular milk white edges, the finger of chelipeds twice the length of palm, carapace with five spines—two lateral dorso-ventrally flattened stout spines on the wither side of the carapace and one intestinal spine on

Table 1. Morphometry (mm) of two species of *Arcania* from Karnataka

Morphometric characteristics	<i>Arcania comuta</i>		<i>Arcania gracilis</i>
	Male	Female	Female
Carapace length	19.39±28.4	21.70 ± 25.54	11.55
Carapace width	35.98 ± 50.80	45.24 ± 50.26	16.58
Lateral spine length	8.29 ± 12.76	9.59 ± 10.39	2.94
Merus of cheliped	16.04 ± 22.43	18.04 ± 22.42	10.59
Carpus of cheliped	5.02 ± 6.11	5.31	2.34
Propodus of cheliped	11.74 ± 17.41	14.29	5.49
Dactylus of cheliped	5.81 ± 7.23	6.81	7.22

the lower part of carapace supported by two small spines on the either posterior borders (Fig. 1). The morphometric details are given in Table 1.

Distributions and habitat

The species is distributed throughout Indo-West Pacific oceans (Madagascar, Red Sea, southern Oman, Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Lakshadweep Islands, Sri Lanka, Arakan coast, Vietnam, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Philippines, Japan, Indonesia, Singapore, Australia, New Caledonia and Vanuatu) (Galil, 2001, 2007; Galil and Ng, 2007, 2010). It has been reported from both the east coast (Madras & Gulf of Mannar, Tamil Nadu; Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh; Ganjam, Odisha) and west coast (Kerala) of India (Alcock, 1896; Kumar *et al.*, 2013; Rout *et al.*, 2019). Mostly found in the sandy substrate at water depths of 26-366 m (Naderloo *et al.*, 2017).

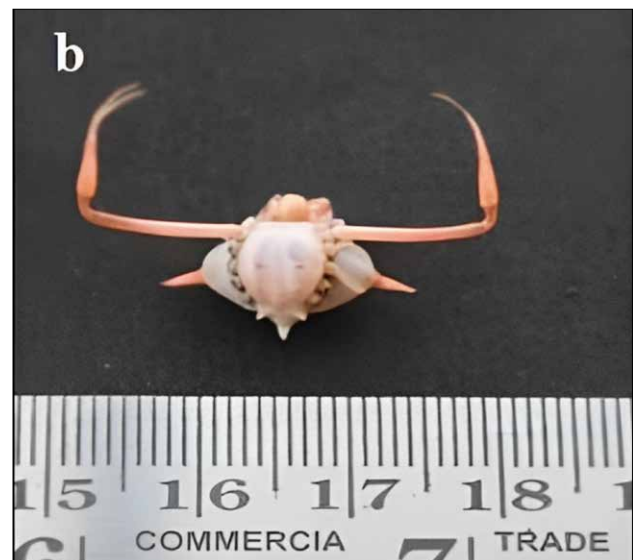
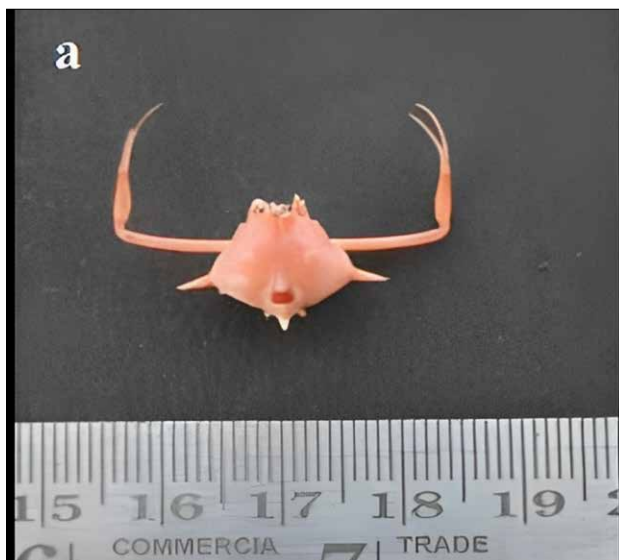


Fig. 1. *A. gracilis* (female): dorsal (a) and ventral (b) view

***A. cornuta* (MacGilchrist, 1905) (Fig. 2 and 3)**

Holotype information

Type locality: This species was originally described as *Ixoides cornutus* by MacGilchrist (1905) from The Persian Gulf. However, Galil (2001) reassigned it to the genus *Arcania*.

Synonyms

Ixoides cornutus—MacGilchrist, 1905. *Ixoides cornutus*—MacGilchrist, 1905; Stephensen, 1946; Titgen, 1982; Tan, 1996; Apel, 2001; Naderloo and Sari, 2005, 2007. *Arcania cornuta*—Galil, 2001: (in key).

Material examined

Six specimens of *A. cornuta* (4 males and 2 females) with carapace lengths differing from 19.39 ± 28.4 were collected by Ahamed Rasheeq and Sanjay Kumar from the trawl landings of Mangaluru fishing harbour dated 30/05/2022 (Table 2, Fig. 2 and 3).



Fig. 2. *A. cornuta* (Female) (a) dorsal and (b) ventral view

Description

The carapace is rhomboidal in shape and orange peach-coloured when alive; the carapace is smooth except for the gastric region being granulated. One large, robust lateral spine on both sides ringed with rounded perliform granules; posterior region of carapace consists of a single median tubercle, below which a pair of obtusely pointed, papilliform granulated constricted tubercles on either side, chelipeds are slender and longer, carpus and propodus smooth, merus are longer than the carapace in males, propodus is dorsoventrally flattened, thicker in the base and fingers are found to be filiform, half as margin of upper palm. Periopods are smooth subcylindrical and filliform, dactyls are setose anteriorly. The male abdomen is found to be elongated with four segments. Third abdominal segment longitudinally ovate and large in size, propodus of chelate leg narrowing towards the tip, slightly swollen with tubercles in subhepatic regions of either side. The most striking identifying feature of *A. cornuta* is the presence of one spiny process on either side of the carapace at the antero-lateral and posterior-lateral border. The antennae are about one-third the length of the antennule. The female specimens (Fig. 2) were bigger than the collected male specimens (Fig. 3).

Distributions and habitat

The species is distributed throughout the Indo-West Pacific: South Africa, Papua New Guinea, Mozambique Channel, Madagascar, Persian Gulf, Vietnam, China, Taiwan, Philippines, Japan, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia and Fiji (Galil, 2001). Along the Indian coast, it has been reported from Vishakapatnam (Devi *et al.*, 1988), Tamil Nadu (Krishnamoorthy, 2009) and Kollam (Devi *et al.*, 1988; Kumar *et al.*, 2013). They are found to inhabit along the subtidal sandy substrate at about 86-300 m (Naderloo *et al.*, 2017).



Fig. 3. *A. cornuta* (Male) (a) dorsal and (b) ventral view

Remarks

The genus *Arcania* (Leach, 1817) listed within the Leucosiid crabs comprises 22 species globally (Ng *et al.*, 2008), among which nine species were reported from Indian waters *viz.* *Arcania brevifrons* (Chen, 1989), *A. cornuta* (MacGilchrist, 1905), *A. erinacea* (Fabricius, 1787), *A. gracilis* (Henderson, 1893), *A. heptacantha* (De Haan, 1861), *A. novemspinosa* (Lichtenstein, 1816), *A. septemspinosa* (Fabricius, 1787), *A. tuberculata* (Bell, 1855) and *A. undecimspinosa* (De Haan, 1841 (Rout *et al.*, 2019). The morphology of *A. cornuta* in the present study closely agreed with the original description and illustrations of *Ixoides cornutus* (= *Arcania cornuta*) by MacGilchrist (1905) collected from the Persian Gulf, and the morphology of *Arcania gracilis* is similar to the original description of *A. septemspinosa* var *gracilis* (= *Arcania gracilis*) described from Andaman (Henderson, 1893). Both the collected specimens (*A. cornuta*, *A. gracilis*) were also verified with the recent description atlas of crabs of the Persian Gulf by (Naderloo *et al.*, 2017).

Results and discussion

A. gracilis can be easily differentiated from other species of *Arcania* by the rudimentary spines in the lower margin of the carapace and the presence of a unique red ocellus in the posterior end of the carapace surrounded by a white rectangular margin (Galil, 2001). Similarly, the presence of certain characteristics like short, stump-like intestinal spines; papillate posterior spines; infraorbital lobe not reaching frontal eaves; apex of third maxilliped exopod not reaching as far forward as endopod merus and significantly shorter cheliped fingers assist to distinguish *A. cornuta* from *A. gracilis*.

The presence of *A. gracilis* from three locations, namely Pudimadaka, Mutthukuru and Antarvedi of Vishakapatnam coast, is the only record of this species in this particular region after Alcock and Anderson (1894), who reported it twelve decades ago (Rout *et al.*, 2019). Nearly 22 species of crabs from the west coast of India were not recorded during the past 100 years since its first report (Dev Roy, 2013). Hence, it emphasizes the need for exploratory studies along the west coast of India.

The data on brachyuran crab diversity in Karnataka is very scarce except for a few publications by Sekharan *et al.* (1962), Ummerkutty and Deb (1968) and Dineshbabu (2005). Later, Dev Roy, 2013 reported and recorded the brachyuran crabs inhabiting the west coast of India, where fourteen species, *viz.*, *Myra fugax* (Leucosiidae), *Doclea hybrida*, *D. muricata* (Epiplatidae), *Charybdis annulata*, *C. feriatius*, *C. helleri*, *C. lucifera*, *C. variegata*, *C. hoplites* (Goniohellenus), *Thalamita crenata*, *Podophthalmus vigil* (Portunidae), *Metopograpsus latifrons* (Grapsidae), *Clistocoeloma merguense* and *Perisesarma bidens* (Sesamidae) were recorded to be the first report from the state of

Karnataka. The annotated checklist of brachyuran crabs of India by Trivedi *et al.* (2018) also confirms the presence of *A. gracilis* and *A. cornuta* only in the Kerala coast along the west coast of India. However, the present study reports the presence of two species of leucosiid crabs under the genus *Arcania* along the Karnataka coast.

Conclusion

The present study reveals the occurrence of two species of leucosiid crabs of the genus *Arcania* (*A. cornuta* and *A. gracilis*) from the Mangaluru coast of Karnataka, forming the first report for both species in Karnataka. The investigation underlines the need for further exploration of marine benthic diversity, especially along the lesser-known Karnataka coast.

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