

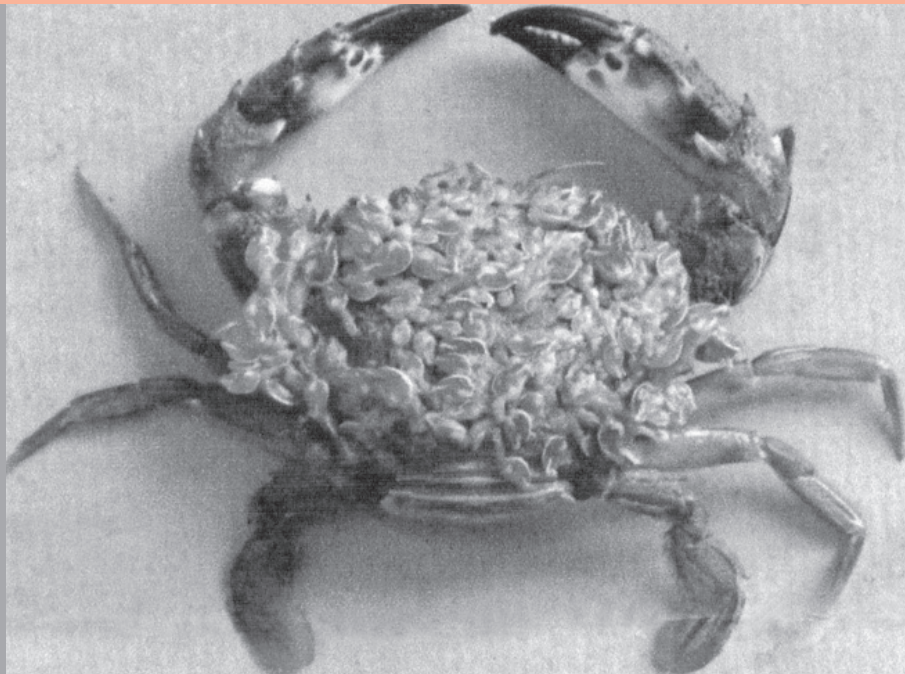
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An incidence of attachment of Barnacles on Portunid crabs landed at Chennai-Pondicherry coasts

A single berried female of portunid crab *Charybdis* (*Charybdis*) *lucifera* known as "Pacha Nandu" in Tamil was collected from the trawl catches landed at Pondicherry Harbour on 13-4-2006. Unusually, large number of short stalked goose barnacles, *Lepas anserifera* were found covering the

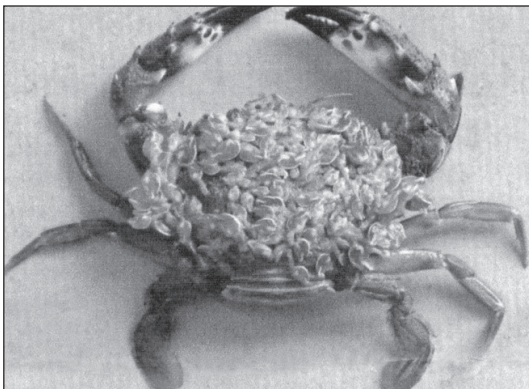


Fig. 1

entire dorsal surface of carapace and on both the chelipeds of crab (Fig. 1). The female crab measured 93 mm in carapace width and weighed 68 g.

65 nos. of *L. anserifera* were found attached to the crab and their total length varied from 25 to 32 mm. In addition, there were five tubicular worms found attached in between the barnacles. *L. anserifera*, a sedentary

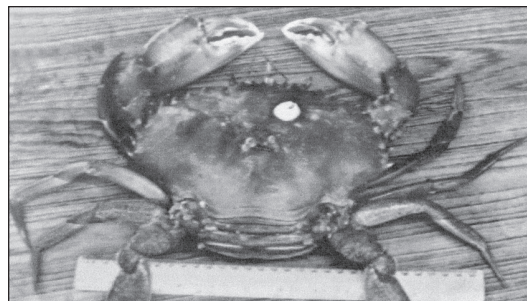


Fig. 2

crustacean is one of the common barnacles found along the east coast of India. It has a planktonic naupliar stage and cyprid larval stage gets attached to any floating object in the sea like buoys, plastic bottles, sea weeds and wooden logs. The barnacle possesses a short stalk for restricted movement. The food is caught by rhythmical grasping motion of the animal's cirri which collect plankton from the suspended sediments from the water and directs it to the mouth. The barnacle is a hermaphrodite and capable of both self and cross-fertilization. Though *L. anserifera* is known to be attached to the floating objects, this is the first time that it is reported here in association with a living organism like the portunid crab. Normally crabs shed their exoskeleton frequently as part of the growth

process. The attachment of large number of barnacles on top of the carapace indicates that the crab has not moulted for a long time.

Another instance of attachment of few acorn barnacles (*Balanus amphitrite*) on carapace (Fig. 2) of another portunid crab caught from the Chennai inshore sea (*Scylla tranquebarica*) female measuring 208 mm in carapace width and 1.2 kg in weight) has also been recorded on 15-4-2006. However, this is the first time that an *en-masse* attachment of *Lepas anserifera* has been observed in the portunid crab *Charybdis* (*Charybdis lucifera*).

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