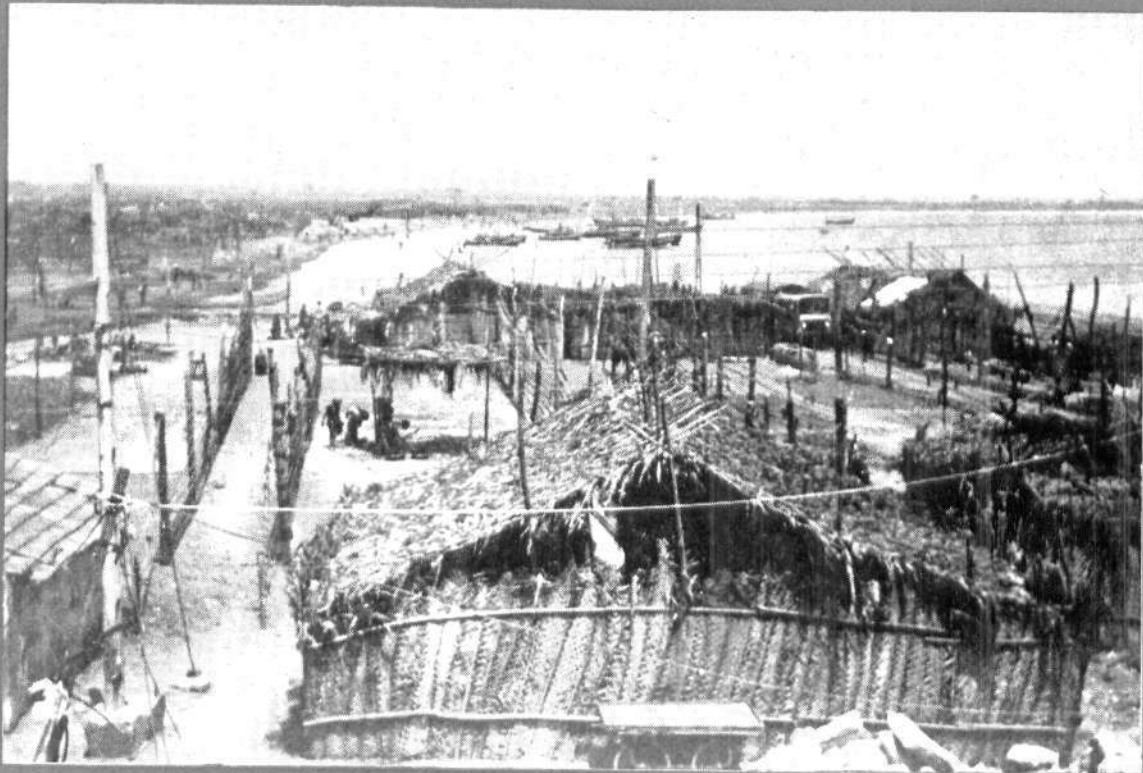




# MARINE FISHERIES INFORMATION SERVICE



No. 69

AUGUST, SEPTEMBER  
OCTOBER  
1986

*Technical and Extension Series*

CENTRAL MARINE FISHERIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
COCHIN, INDIA

INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

## ON THE OCCURRENCE OF *DROMIA DEHAANI* RATHBURN IN TRAWLER CATCHES OFF BOMBAY COAST\*

*Dromia dehaani* Rathburn, a crab ('Red kekada' in Maratti) has been reported from both the coasts of India but only in small numbers. Its landing in fairly large quantities by trawlers at New Ferry Wharf, Bombay, seems to be of great significance mainly because of two reasons, (1) its unusual large scale landings and the subsequent awareness among the public have made it an edible resource and (2) the presence of berried females with large number of eggs pointed to the possibility of its occurrence in deeper regions as a potential resource.

The crab is rather large with carapace broader than long. The four antero-lateral teeth are sub-equal but distance between 3rd and 4th is much greater than those between first and second, and second and third. The surface immediately behind front is smooth and even. Tips of chelipeds are distinctly pinkish in colour.



Fig. 1. *Dromia dehaani*- dorsal view of male and female.

The trawlers which brought the crabs were operated off Harnai-Murud coast at a depth range of 40-60m. The estimated landings amounted to 30 kg per day from

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10 units. A representative sample was collected from the centre and was analysed. Biological observations made are as follows.

Name of species	Sl. No.	Carapace length (mm)	Carapace width (mm)	Weight (g)	Sex
<i>Dromia dehaani</i>	1.	46	52	35	F (berried)
	2.	48	53	50	F
	3.	57	65	80	F
	4.	55	64	95	F
	5.	60	72	145	M

The specimens were large in size, the biggest being a male with a weight of 145 g and stout chelipeds (Fig. 1). The average weight was estimated at 81 g. Two of the four females were in berried condition with numerous small eggs. The number of eggs carried by females was estimated to be about a lakh.

This resource is relatively new and so does not command good price as in the case of large sized portunid crabs. However, they were sold at a rate of Rs. 0.50-1.00 per specimen based on the size of the crab. It is quite probable that this species may command better prices in future due to consumer acceptance. The edible nature of this species is reported for the first time in Bombay. Good landing of this species can be expected in future when deeper regions are explored by trawlers.

The authors are deeply grateful to Dr. M.J. George, Senior Scientist and Head of Crustacean Division (Rtd.) CMFRI, Cochin for kindly going through the manuscript. They are also thankful to Dr. E.G. Silas, former Director, CMFRI, for his interest in the preparation of this note.

