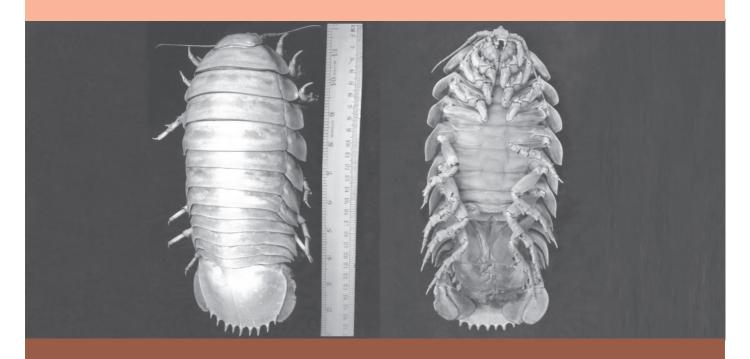


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CENTRAL MARINE FISHERIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

COCHIN, INDIA

(INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH)

Report on the first occurrence of *Bathynomus giganteus*, a deep sea isopod from the west coast of India

A deep sea isopod specimen was collected	cted	5.	Maxi
from Cochin Fisheries Harbour, w	hile	6.	Lengt
unloading the catch on 14.03.2006.	The		Ü
giant isopod was caught by a trav	vler	7.	Lengt
operated at a depth of 520 meters	off	8.	Lengt
Ezhimala, Kannur district of Kerala.	The		walki
specimen was identified as Bathynoi	mus	9.	Lengt
giganteus (Fig 1A &B) belonging to	the		walki
order isopoda, suborder flabellifera and family cirulanidae. The morphometric		10.	Total
given below.			last al
1. Total length 28	30.0	The	range
Č	25.2	gigo	anteus

1.	Total length	280.0
2.	Length of head	35.3
3.	Length of thorax	174.0
4.	Length of last	
	abdominal segment	70.4

5.	Maximum breadth	105.4		
6.	Length of antenna	78.0		
7.	Length of antennule	20.0		
8.	Length of anterior walking leg	91.0		
9.	Length of posterior walking leg	110.0		
10.	Total weight	655.0 g		
11.	Number of spines on the last abdominal segment	11		
The range of distribution of <i>Bathynomus</i> giganteus is Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea,				

giganteus is Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Mexico and the south western Atlantic off Brazil. Its habitat is the sea bottom at a depth ranging from 1200 ft. to 2000 ft. It lives in an area where the light

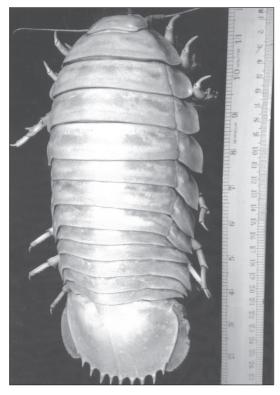


Fig. 1 a *Bathynomus giganteus* (Dorsal view)

penetration is very less and the temperature is extremely cold.

In India it was first reported from the coastal waters of Thoothukudi in Bay of Bengal at a depth of 300 ft. The specimen was having a total length of 260 mm and a maximum breadth of 95 mm. The present report of the occurrence of *Bathynomus giganteus* is for the first time from the West coast of India. The specimen is bigger than the one reported from the east coast. It was reported that *Bathynomus giganteus* grows upto a length of 420 mm (18 inch) and

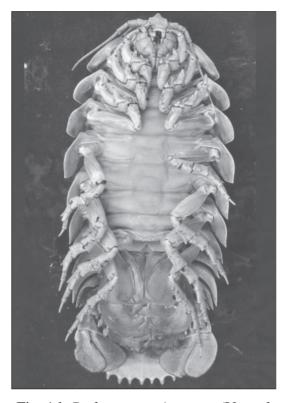


Fig. 1 b *Bathynomus giganteus* (Ventral view)

attains a weight of 1360 grams (3 pounds)

Bathynomus giganteus is not a fast swimmer and does not migrate to a longer distance in search of food or for the purpose of spawning. Since food is scarce in the habitat, they are adapted to feast or famine. However it is reported that they are carnivores and feed on fish, sponges, small crusteaceans, nematode worms and protozoans. They prey on diseased or injured fish and also attack fish that have been caught in the net. Bathynomus giganteus is an egg laying animal. The

females are provided with a brood pouch in which the eggs are brooded and the young ones are released. The specimen is

currently in display at the museum of

Central Marine Fisheries Research

Institute, Kochi.

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