

Occurrence of a rare species of red crab, *Ranina ranina* (Linnaeus 1758) along Chennai coast

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The red frog crab otherwise called spanner crab is a coastal water species and single representative of genus *Ranina* under family Raninidea. They prefer to inhabit in bare sandy areas of intertidal and coastal waters of more than 100m depth. Distribution of this crab is confined to tropical and sub tropical coastal waters of Indian and Pacific oceans, from the coast of South Africa to Hawaii and the Great Barrier Reef. Occurrence of this species is very sparse in Indian waters and has been recorded once in Gulf of Mannar (Kasinathan *et al.*, 2007).

The present specimen was a female specimen collected on 14.09.2013 from Pulicat landing centre, north of Chennai coast (Fig. 1). It was caught in bottom set gillnet operated at 15-25m depth, 40 km, away from the barrier island of Sriharikota, north of Chennai coast. The carapace width was 9.0 cm and weight 285g. Morphometric details of the present specimen are given Table 1. Carapace completely covered by low rounded scale like spines in large or small numbers, are broader anteriorly. The eye stalks set vertical and longer. Body colour



Dorsal view

Ventral view

is reddish brown with about 10 white spots on anterior part of carapace. They aggregate to spawn during the warmer months and mate at any stage in the moult cycle (Brown, 1986). This species form exclusive fishery and are largely exploited for its edible value in Australia. In India, there is

commercial value for this species but are less encountered in fisheries.

Table 1. Morphometric measurements of *Ranina ranina*

Characters	Measurements (mm)
Carapace length	: 105
Carapace width	: 90
Abdomen length	: 57
Abdomen width	: 42
Weight	: 285 g
Sex	: female
Carapace spines	: 21 nos
White spot on the anterior Side of the carapace	: 10 nos
Colour	: Reddish brown
Colour of egg	: Orange