

# A brief note on portunid crab, *Charybdis (Goniohellenus) omanensis septentrionalis* from southwest coast of India

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Crustacean Fisheries Division of ICAR-CMFRI, has recently taken up a two year programme on experimental trawling using fishing vessel *F.V. Silver Pompano*. Samples were collected from different bathymetric stations off Kochi and Alappuzha during fortnightly intervals. Samples in the last fortnight of August 2016, collected at a depth of 65m off Alappuzha, included a good number of *Charybdis (Goniohellenus) smithii* along with fishes and other crustaceans. While segregating the samples of swarming crab *C. (G.) smithii*, approximately 5 kg of small sized *Charybdis* sp. was also collected. This species was not included in the earlier samplings of the programme as well as in the commercial fishery landings. Hence detailed studies were carried out and found the species is *C.(G.) omanensis septentrionalis*, a new record in the Indian seas. The detailed morphometric and diagnostic characters examined were similar to the descriptions given by Türkay & Spiridonov (2006) *Fauna of Arabia* 22: 199-223; who first recorded the species from the Red Sea. Specimens of the species have deposited in the Designated National Repository (DNR) of ICAR- CMFRI, Kochi (ED: 5.5.10). The species size ranged between 17 to 37mm carapace width and total weight between 0.62 and 5.53 g. The carapace is light brownish in colour and anterolateral border with six teeth, and among them second is the smallest and sixth is the longest (Fig. 1). Chelipeds are almost similar in size and bear

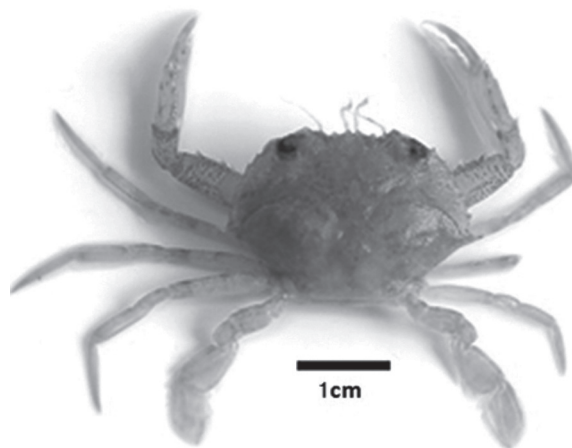


Fig. 1. *Charybdis (Goniohellenus) omanensis septentrionalis*

granular reddish brown patches. Second to fourth ambulatory legs are slender and shorter than chelipeds; swimming legs with propodus and dactylus flattened and bear numerous fine setae along the borders. The identity of the species is confirmed based on the morphological characters viz., shape of the median frontal teeth which are not pointed; not twisted or weakly twisted downward distal tip of gonopod 1 and the ratio between carapace width and carapace length. When compared to the other species of portunid crabs of the region, *C.(G.) omanensis septentrionalis* is very small in size and has little importance in the commercial fisheries at present.