

Podophthalmus vigil landings at Kalamukku Harbour

Podophthalmus vigil, a portunid crab less appears in landings of Kerala and does not form a regular fishery in the region. In last two years comparatively good landings were recorded in overall landings of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. In Kerala, the maximum landing was recorded in the year 2014 (205.5 tonnes) followed by 2023 (167.1 t) and 2022 (71.8 t) and in other years no substantial landings were recorded. Recently during April 2024, a good landing was recorded at Kalamukku landing centre, Vypin, Cochin. This species is commonly known as 'sentinel crab' and also long-eyed crab, from its long eye stalks which is an uncommon character in portunid crabs. This species of swimmer crab is found in tropical areas of the Indo-Pacific Ocean, including Hawaii, Japan, South Africa, the Red Sea, and Australia. The carapace is greenish brown, and chelate legs and walking legs are in bright violet in male crabs, whereas the colour is pale violet. The carapace is very distinctly broader than long; the anterior margin is much



Adult male *Podophthalmus vigil* landed at Kalamukku Harbour

broader than the posterior border, with a pair of anterolateral spines on either side. The long eyestalks reach or extend beyond the edges of the carapace. Males are larger than females and have more elongated limbs. From the landings, approximately 10 kg of the sample was procured, and brought to the laboratory and sample was segregated sex-wise and details were recorded. Only intact crabs i.e., crabs with all appendages were used for the morphometric studies. Females were dominating, the male: female ratio was 1:1.63. Carapace

widths of the crab between the first and second anterolateral teeth were taken and designated as CW-1 and CW-2 respectively.

All the crabs were mature and among females, four crabs were in berried stage. In Tamil Nadu, the species forms a minor fishery and local people consume the species. However, presently, the species has no acceptance among the consumers of Kerala.

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Table 1. Details of carapace with/length and total weight of the male and female crabs of *Podophthalmus vigil* from trawl landings Cochin, India.

Sex	CW-1 (mm)	CW-2 (mm)	CL (mm)	TW (g)	Maturity condition
Male	65–115	53–95	28–45	13–111	Mature
Average	88.2 ± 10.9	70.7 ± 8.7	34.5 ± 2.4	45.0 ± 18.0	
Female	64–96	53–75	28–40	13–73	Mature; 4 berried
Average	75.8 ± 6.4	63.1 ± 5.3	32.0 ± 2.4	34.2 ± 8.7	
Pooled	64–115	53–95	28–45	13–111	All mature
Average	80.6 ± 10.3	65.9 ± 8.1	32.9 ± 3.2	38.3 ± 14.1	

CW-1 & CW-2- Carapace width 1 & 2; CL- Carapace length; TW- Total weight