

***Ixa inermis* LEACH (CRUSTACEA, DECAPODA, BRACHYURA)
A NEW RECORD FROM INDIAN WATERS**

ABSTRACT

The crab, *Ixa inermis* Leach is recorded for the first time from Indian waters from 10° 08' N. and 76° 05' E. at a depth of 26 m. The note embodies a redescription of this species with illustrations.

A single female specimen of *Ixa inermis* Leach measuring 13.5 mm in length and 33.5 mm in extreme breadth was obtained along with a major catch of prawns by the Govt. of India fishing vessel M.L. *DURGA* from off Cochin (Lat. 10° 08' N. and Long. 76° 5' E.) at 26 metres depth on 3-2-1968. As this is the first record of its occurrence in Indian waters, a redescription of the species is given here.

***Ixa inermis* Leach (Fig. 1a-c)**

Ixa inermis Leach, 1817, p. 26, pl. 129, fig. 2.

Ixa inermis Holthuis & Gottlieb, 1956, p. 296 (see for synonyms).

Description: Carapace broadly rhomboidal with lateral projections equal in length and cylindrical throughout; distal end of each lateral projection narrows quite abruptly being surmounted by an anteriorly directed sharp spine (Fig. 1); a pair of fairly deep and broad longitudinal grooves are present on dorsal surface of carapace, each showing a single indistinct anterior bifurcation; the floor of these grooves being filled with tomentose pubescence and edges being almost rounded, gradually merging with the dorsal surface of carapace towards posterior region; body surface is covered

with small granules, which are most numerous on lateral projections; posterior margin of carapace provided with two ill-defined submedian granular projections which do not appear petaloid processes.

Buccal cavern (Fig. 1) almost quadrate; anterolateral border of the oral field touches orbital margin and anterior median portion is deeply sunken; exopod of the outer maxilliped (Fig. 1) is somewhat convex and covered with a few scattered

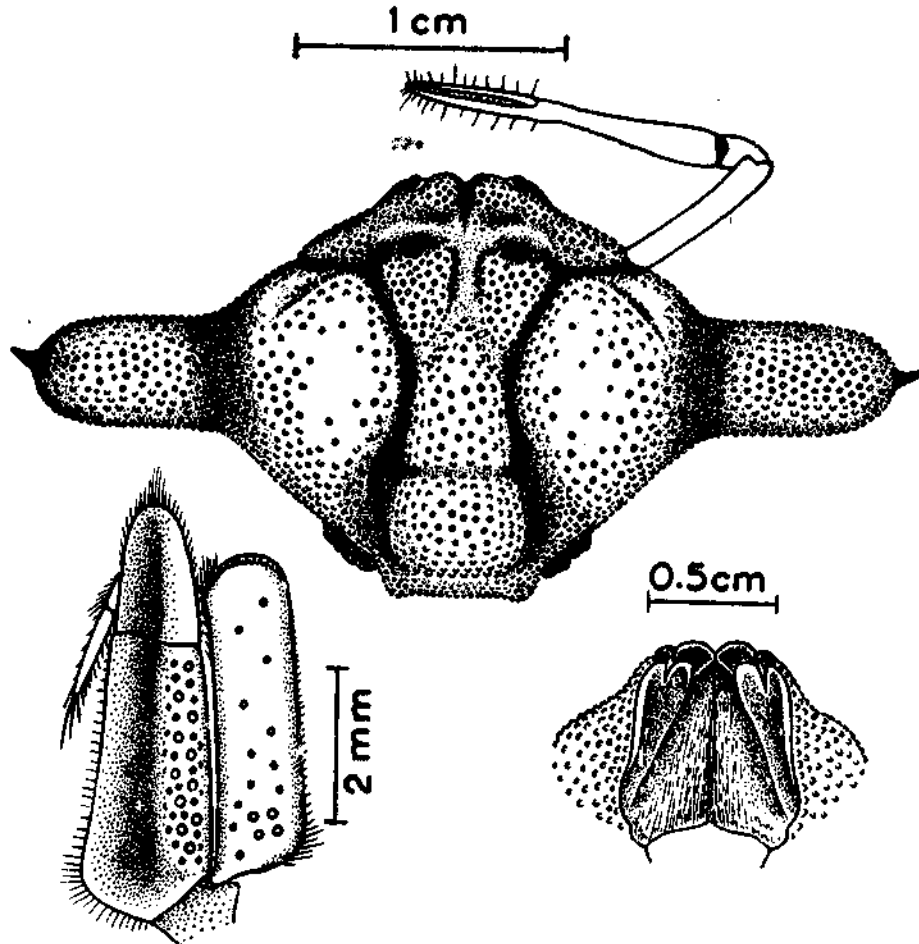


FIG. 1. *Ixa inermis* Leach. dorsal view, with the right cheliped; Bottom right: buccal cavern; Bottom left: outer maxilliped.

and flattened tubercles; ischium of the endopod grooved along its inner border, its outer margin distinctly convex and covered with a narrow band of blunt and small tubercles.

Distribution: *Ixa inermis* Leach appears to be a lesser known species and it has been so far recorded only from the Malay Archipelago, the type locality being unknown. The present record extends its distribution to the Arabian Sea.

A perusal of literature on the various species of *Ixa* from Indian waters has indicated that so far only three species namely, *I. cylindrus* (Fabricius), *I. inermis* Leach and *I. investigatoris* Chopra, have been recorded, all from the east coast. Alcock (1896), recorded a single specimen from the Orissa Coast, but doubtfully referred it to *Ixa inermis* Leach. Later, Chopra (1933) collected a similar specimen from the Sandheads and he also recorded it as *I. inermis* Leach, giving a detailed description with figures. He had also reexamined Alcock's material deposited in the Indian Museum collections, Calcutta. Recently, however, Holthuis and Gottlieb (1956) have shown that the specimens described by Alcock (1896) and Chopra (1933) as *Ixa inermis* do not belong to that species but are probably referable to *Ixa edwardsii* Lucas.

The original record of *I. inermis* Leach, unfortunately, did not contain a good description of the species. However, Holthuis and Gottlieb (op. cit.) have given a fairly detailed description of their material (treated under Form B) which agrees with Leach's (1817) species *Ixa inermis*. The present specimen agrees well with the description given by these authors, but for minor differences. In the present material, the tip of the lateral projection bears a sharp spine and the submedian tubercles on the posterior border of the carapace are ill-defined. Holthuis and Gottlieb noticed in their specimens the tip of each lateral projection with a blunt and sharp tubercle and the posterior margin of the carapace with two distinct submedian granular tubercles. These structural variations may be attributed to the stage of growth; the present specimen being younger as evidenced by its smaller size.

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