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**ON THE OCCURRENCE OF *PODOPHTHALMUS VIGIL* (FABRICIUS)
[DECAPODA : CRUSTACEA] ON THE WEST COAST OF INDIA**

Podophthalmus Lamarck is the only genus recorded from the Indo-West-Pacific, of the subfamily Podophthalminae Borradaile and includes only two species namely *Podophthalmus vigil* (Fabricius) and *Podophthalmus nacreus* Alcock. The species *vigil* was created by Fabricius on the material collected by D.C. de Daldorff from the east coast of India. Perhaps due to the very rare occurrence of this species, it has not subsequently been reported from the Indian coast until 1962 when Premkumar (1962) came across a single male specimen from Sinnur which according to him 'appears to be the second (or possibly the first) record of the species from the Indian seas'. That this species has a fairly wide distribution in the Indo-West-Pacific is evident from the fact that this has been reported from Australia (Stephenson and Campbell, 1960), Red Sea (Shen, 1937), Iranian gulf (Stephenson, 1945), Formosa and Philippines to Hawaii (Shen, 1937; and Edmondson 1954).

While studying the biology of certain decapods from the south-west coast of India the author had opportunities to collect and examine six specimens of this interesting but rare portunid. Of the six specimens in the present collection five are males (carapace breadth including spines 54-61 mm.) and one female (47 mm.). The specimens were collected in the trawl nets operated at a depth of 20-27 fathoms off Cochin along with such other portunids as *Portunus (Portunus) sanguinolentus* (Herbst) and *Portunus (Portunus) pelagicus* (Linnaeus) and penaeids such as *Metapenaeus monoceros* Fabricius and *Metapenaeus affinis* (M.Edw.) during the period February to April 1964.

It may be noted that the comprehensive taxonomic studies on crabs reported by Pillai (1951) from Travancore coast and Chhapgar (1957) from the Bombay coast do not contain any mention of this genus which also suggest the rarity of this form.

Premkumar (1962) while recording this species from the east coast does not give any information either about the size of the specimen or about the depth from which it was obtained, while Stephenson and Campbell (1960) report this species comprising both males and females from the sandy mud and weedy habitat at a depth of 5-10 fathoms. The habitat of the specimens before me is deeper waters with a bottom of mud and debris off the Cochin Coast. The size of crabs in the present collection ranges from 47-61 mm. while those of Stephenson and Campbell's collection ranges from 55-142 mm. Whether the comparative smallness of these west coast forms is due to immaturity or due to smallness in size of the tropical forms when compared to those of the Australian waters is not evident. The collec-

tion of more material may bring to light further details about the biology of this small but interesting species.

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*Not seen in original.

ON A NEW RECORD OF *METAPENAEUS STEBBINGI* NOBILI, IN INDIAN WATERS

THE geographical distribution of *Metapenaeus stebbingi* is limited. It is known to occur in the Red Sea and Suez (Nobili 1904 and 1906, Tattersall 1921 and Burkenroad 1934), Delagoa Bay of South Africa (Barnard 1950) and off Karachi in Pakistan (Tirmizi 1962).

Thirty-five males and sixty females of *M. stebbingi*, measuring 56-90 mm. and 57-113 mm. respectively were collected from the inshore waters of Kutch (Gulf of Kutch) during July 1961-June 1962. It was found mixed with other commercial species of prawns in the catches of *gunja* (stake-net). This species is recorded for the first time from the Indian waters and thus extends the limits of its geographical distribution.

Specimens in fresh condition are greyish and faintly speckled. They agree in general with the description of the species given by the earlier authors, except in the presence, in males, of an upturned spinous projection on either side of the stem of the petasma, a little above the joint with the pleopod (Fig. 1).

Tirmizi (1962) claims to have noticed differences in the structure of the petasma and thelycum from that described by the earlier authors. But all the structural