

# First record of the scyllarid lobster *Scyllarides tridacnophaga* from Chennai coast

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Bottom set gillnet operations for crabs is a common fishing practice along Chennai coast which also brings in catches of sciaenids, flatfishes and rays. One specimen of the giant clam killer lobster, *Scyllarides tridacnophaga* Holthuis, 1967 (Infraorder: Palinuridea; Superfamily Palinuroidea; Family: Scyllaridae) was obtained in a bottom set gillnet cast at 20 fathoms off Kovalam, Chennai, during July 2011. Although this species has been reported earlier from Rameswaram and from the west coast, this is the first report from Chennai coast. The species is known to be distributed in the Indo-West Pacific region, from East Africa, Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Pakistan to the west coast of Thailand.

The species is reported to grow up to 300 mm total length with carapace lengths ranging from 60 to 120 mm. The specimen obtained was a male, measuring 75 mm in carapace length. The species has no chela on pereopods, antennal flagellum broad and flat, shallow cervical incision, no postorbital spine, carapace strongly vaulted, posterior margin of the pleura of second abdominal somite concave and broadly rounded, pregastric tooth distinctly two-topped, first abdominal somite with three red spots, shell very robust. The median carina on the

dorsal abdominal somite is distinct and the humps are also rounded and distinct on somites 2,3,4. Male (CL-75mm) with rudimentary pleopods on the second and third pleura and the gonopore opening on the 5<sup>th</sup> leg coxa as a small opening in the anterior area. Body purplish to pink in colour with small rounded tubercles and granules, whitish irregular patches on the carapace sides and center. Nocturnal in habit and feeds on marine clams, holds fast on to substrate, moves very slow and slow to domestication. The shell opening capacity is found to be very high when compared to the sand lobster (*Thenus* sp.).



*Scyllarides tridacnophaga* collected from Kovalam, Chennai