



Agriculture and Fisheries Development Fund

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Marine Science Fisheries Centre



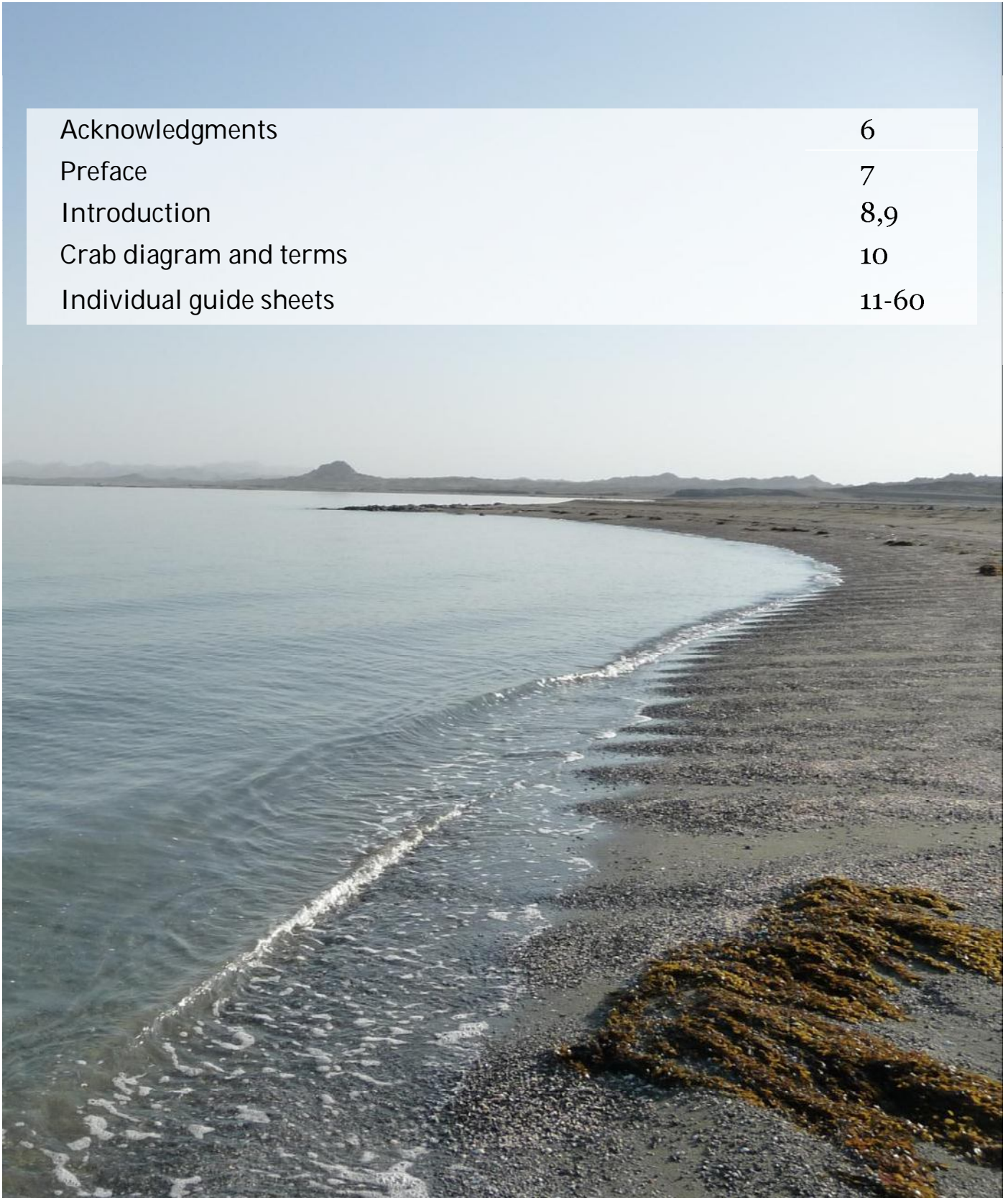
Crabs of Sultanate of Oman



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Field guide content

Acknowledgments	6
Preface	7
Introduction	8,9
Crab diagram and terms	10
Individual guide sheets	11-60



Individual guide sheets

Family	Common name	Scientific name	Code	
Dromiidae	Japanese sponge crab	<i>Lauridromia dehaani</i>	LAD	11
	Sponge crab	<i>Cryptodromiopsis unidentata</i>	CRU	12
Homolidae	Carrier crab	<i>Homola</i> sp.	HOM	13
Calappidae	Japanese shame faced crab	<i>Calappa japonica</i>	CJA	14
	Common box crab	<i>C. lophos</i>	CLO	15
	Rough box crab	<i>C. gallus</i>	CLU	16
	Hepatic box crab	<i>C. hepatica</i>	CHE	17
	Box crab	<i>C. philargius</i>	CPH	18
	Box crab	<i>Mursia bicristimana</i>	MBI	19
	Matutidae	Spotted moon crab	<i>Ashtoret lunaris</i>	ASL
Carpiliidae	Red reef crab	<i>Carpilius convexus</i>	CCO	21
Eriphiidae	Redeyed crab	<i>Eriphia sebana</i>	ESE	22
	Rough reeyed crab	<i>E. smithii</i>	ESM	23
Leucosiidae	Purse crab	<i>Arcania</i> sp.	ARC	24
	Purse crab	<i>Bellidilia undecimspinosa</i>	BLU	25
	Purse crab	<i>Euclosia obtusifrons</i>	EUO	26
Majidae	Armstrong's spider crab	<i>Encephalloides armstrongi</i>	ENA	27
	Decorator crab	<i>Hyastenus diacanthus</i>	HYD	28
	Decorator crab	<i>Naxioides robillardi</i>	NAR	29
	Velcro crab	<i>Camposcia retusa</i>	CAR	30
Parthenopidae	Parthenopid crab	<i>Daldorfia spinosissima</i>	DAS	31
Pilumnidae	Hairy crab	<i>Nanopilumnus heterodon</i>	NHE	32
Portunidae	Swimming crab	<i>Portunus petreus</i>	PPE	33
	Blood spotted crab	<i>Portunus sanguinolentus</i>	PSN	34
	Flower (sand) crab	<i>Portunus segnis</i>	PSG	35
	Giant mangrove (mud) crab	<i>Scylla serrata</i>	SSE	36
	Swimming crab	<i>Charybdis annulata</i>	CHA	37
	Crucifix crab	<i>Ch. feriata</i>	CHF	38
	Indo-Pacific swimming crab	<i>Ch. hellerii</i>	CHR	39
	Swimming crab	<i>Ch. lucifera</i>	CHL	40
	Swimming crab	<i>Ch. miles</i>	CHM	41
	Rock swimming crab	<i>Ch. natator</i>	CHN	42
	Swimming crab	<i>Ch. sagamiensis</i>	CHA	43
	Deep water swimming crab	<i>Ch. smithii</i>	CHM	44
	Swimming crab	<i>Gonioinfradens paucidentatus</i>	GOP	45

Individual guide sheets

	Mangrove swimming crab	<i>Thalamita crenata</i>	TCE	46
	Swimming crab	<i>Thalamita dakini</i>	TDA	47
Xanthidae	Stone crab	<i>Atergatis integerrimus</i>	ATI	48
	Smooth spooner	<i>Etisus laevimanus</i>	ETL	49
	Stone crab	<i>Gaillardiiellus rueppelli</i>	GRU	50
	Stone crab	<i>Leptodius exaratus</i>	LEX	51
	Reef crab	<i>Liomera cinctimana</i>	LIC	52
	Stone crab	<i>Psaumis cavipes</i>	PSC	53
Gecarcinidae	Brown land crab	<i>Cardisoma carnifex</i>	CCF	54
Grapsidae	Rock crab	<i>Geograpsus stormi</i>	GES	55
	Rock crab	<i>Grapsus albolineatus</i>	GRA	56
	Messor's shore crab	<i>Metopograpsus messor</i>	MME	57
Ocypodidae	Ghost crab	<i>Ocypode jousseaumei</i>	OCJ	58
	Ghost crab	<i>Ocypode rotundata</i>	OCR	59
	Ghost crab	<i>Ocypode saratan</i>	OCS	60



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Our thanks are due to Dr. Juma Al-Mammary, Dr. Shama Zakialdeen Abdul Haleem, Dr. Sahar Mehanna, Mrs. Fatma Al-Kiyumi, Dr. Michael Chesalin, Mr. Said Al-Shogeabi, for their kind help and support in preparation of this Guide. We also thank all the scientific and technical staff of the Marine Science and Fisheries Centre who had helped in the field and laboratory work.



Preface

The guide provides identification sheets of 50 crab species, each with a coloured image and a description of the key diagnostic features and known distribution, both by depth and geographic location.

It is aimed to assist in the identification of key crab species in Sultanate of Oman. For each species there is an illustration and key diagnostic features that identify the crab and distinguish it from others, information on the known depth range and distribution in Omani waters, the bottom type on which it is found, and the fishing methods by which it is caught.

If crabs cannot be identified using this guide, a specimen should be retained for identification. Crabs should be individually frozen in plastic bags, and include permanent labels with full capture details, i.e., date, position, and depth of capture, or the voyage number and station number. If the crab is fragile, place in a container of seawater before freezing.

Send by frozen freight to: **Dr. Sergey Khvorov**, Marine Science and Fisheries Centre,
P.O.Box: 427, Muscat. Postal code: 100 - Tel.24736449 - Fax 24740159.

Introduction

The term *crab* is most commonly used in relation to the more than 4500 existing species of decapod crustaceans included in the infraorder Brachyura, which typically have a very short projecting "tail" (Greek: *brachys* = short, *oura* = tail).

Morphology

Abdomen (tail) of true crabs is reduced in size, bent under thorax, first pereopod chelate, ambulatory legs 2-4 alike (Ingle, 1992). With reduction of the abdomen, the center of gravity shifted forward to a point beneath the cephalothorax, and a change in body shape occurred. The cylindrical cephalothorax of the macruran body plan gave to the conical shape of Brachyura. Crabs vary in size from the pea crab, a few millimeters wide, to the Japanese spider crab, with a leg span of up to 4 meters (13 ft.).

Ecology

True crabs are the most advanced, diverse and successful group of the decapods. Crabs are highly adapted to the environment. They are dominant in many estuarine habitats where salinity and temperatures fluctuate dramatically daily.

Some are active temporary swimmers (portunid crabs), but most are walking bottom-dwellers. Some even climb trees (grapsid, gecarcinid crabs) and construct burrows in land (ocypodid crabs).

Feeding

Crabs are filter feeders, sand cleaners, mud, plant and carrion feeders, predators, commensals, and parasites. Few crabs are specialized feeders; most are opportunistic omnivores and, hence, are highly vulnerable to the baited trap form of capture. The effectiveness of baited gear is directly related to the omnivorous, scavenging, feeding behavior of crabs.

Agonistic behavior

Crabs spend most of their time crawling on the bottom. They are pugnacious animals therefore main feature of its social organization is spacing system which consists from overlapping zones of

attack and retreat. Ocypodid crabs construct "hoods" (shelters) which decreased territory size.

Reproductive behavior

Mating occurs only when the female has just molted and her new shell is not yet hard; the males however are in their hard-shelled form. Thus males may protect a female just before she molts, so he can have first access when she is able to mate, and may continue to protect her till shell hardens. Some males even carry the female around.

Reproduction

Usually the eggs are laid shortly after mating, but females can also store sperm for many months. The eggs are fertilized as they pass through the chamber holding the sperm. In most, the females carry their eggs cemented to their underside and protected by the tail, which is folded under the body to form a brood pouch. Some large females can carry as many as 300,000 eggs. The eggs of marine crabs pass through two larval stages in the female's brood pouch before they hatch into tiny free-swimming larvae with long spines, a long narrow abdomen and antennae. They then pass through 3 or 4 distinctive larval stages before setting to the bottom as tiny crabs. Eggs of freshwater crabs are larger and hatch directly into juvenile crabs.

Distribution

The Brachyura show extreme versatility in distribution. They are found from the shore to the deep sea down to 6000 meters, in marine, brackish and freshwater environments, in all climates, and in terrestrial and semi terrestrial conditions.

Crab fishery

Subtropical regions (Indian Ocean etc.) are known to support sizeable stocks of potentially marketable portunid crabs sand crab (*Portunus pelagicus*) and mangrove crab (*Scylla serrata*). These two species dominate the crab landings in India, Burma, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Vietnam and China.

Crab culture

The diversity of brachyuran crab, both morphologically and ecologically, is extreme; hence, there are many potential candidates for culture. Interest in crab culture always starts with species of commercial fishing interest, not with biologically most-suited species. Many species are fished commercially, and only a few, mainly xanthids, are known to be toxic. Reproductively, most crabs offer little problem for culture, but most species of commercial interest are carnivores or predators (Portunidae, Cancridae, Xanthidae). There are herbivores or detritivores crabs that are interest for culture. The spider crabs are among the algae eaters.

The Portunidae contains some of the most gastronomically and economically attractive crabs. In the Indo-Pacific, large mangrove or mud crab,

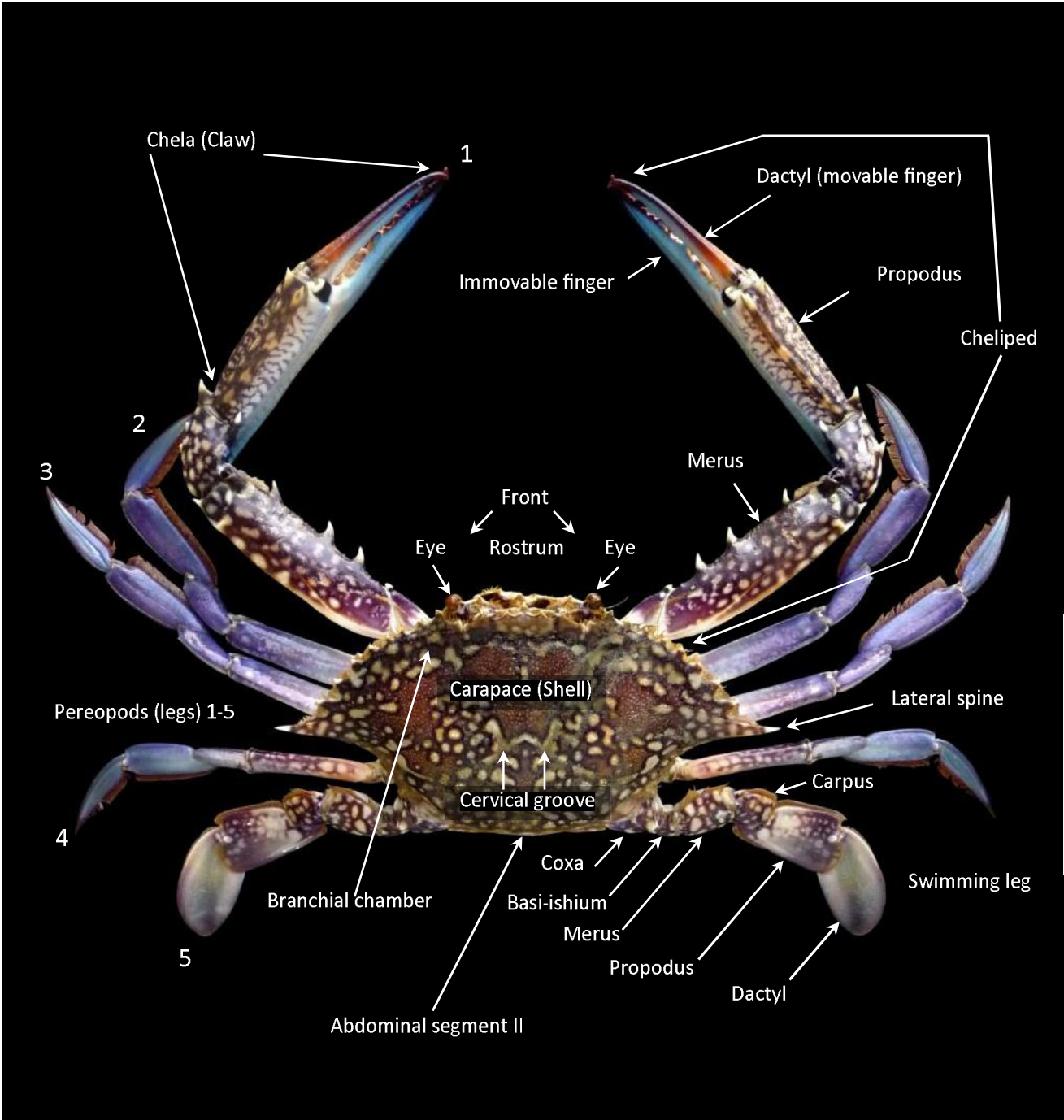
Scylla serrata is an important fishery species and has been cultured for some years in fish ponds. The species can reach a weight of 0.5 kg in 1 year.

Key references:

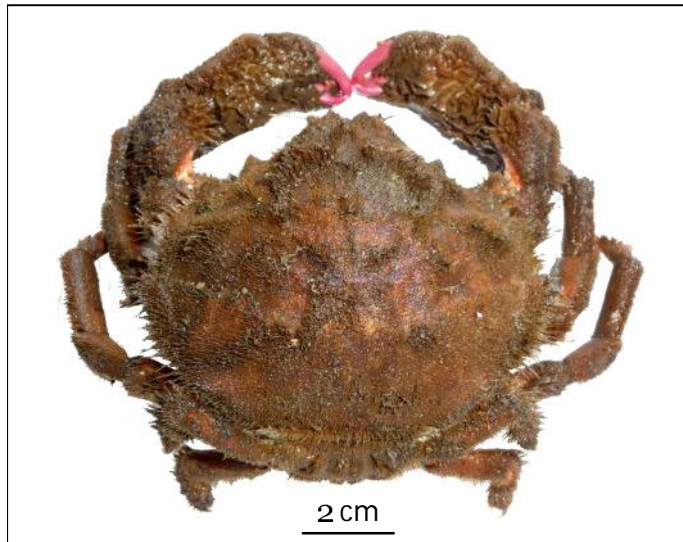
1. Haefner P.A. 1985. The biology and exploitation of crabs. In: The biology of Crustacea . V.10, Economic aspects: Fisheries and cultures. Ed. A. J. Provenzano Jr., Acad. Press.
2. NG P.K.L. , D. Guinot, P.J.F. Davie. 2008. Systema Brachyurorum: Part I. An annotated checklist of extant Brachyuran crabs of the World. The Raffles Bulletin of Zoology, 17: 1-286.



Crab diagram and terms



Fam. Dromiidae
Lauridromia dehaani (Rathbun, 1923)



Distinguishing features:

1. Carapace as wide as long with rather shaggy tomentum;
2. Four teeth on each antero-lateral margins;
3. Rostrum tridentate;
4. Inner margin of dactyli of second and third pereopods with 16-20 tiny spines.

Habitat: reefs or on soft-substrate bottoms.

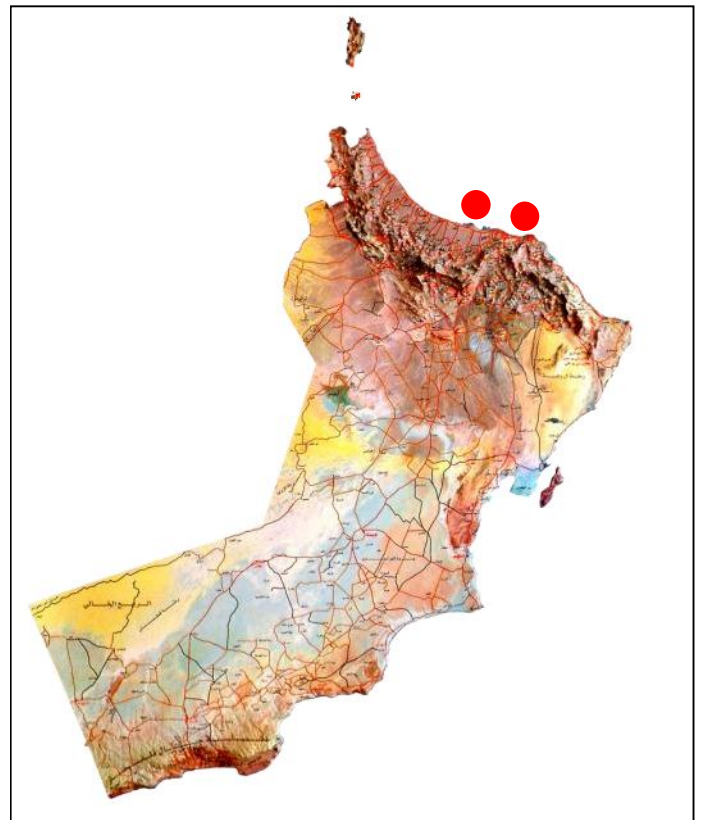
Depth range: 10-150 meters deep.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: locally consumed by some rural communities, rarely sold in local markets.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.
2. P.K.L. Ng. Crabs. pp. 1046- 1155. In: FAO species identification guide for fishery purpose. The living marine resources of the Western Central Pacific. Volume 2. Cephalopods, crustaceans, holothurians and sharks. Carpenter, K.E.; Niem, V.H. (eds.). Rome, FAO. 1998. 687-1396 p.



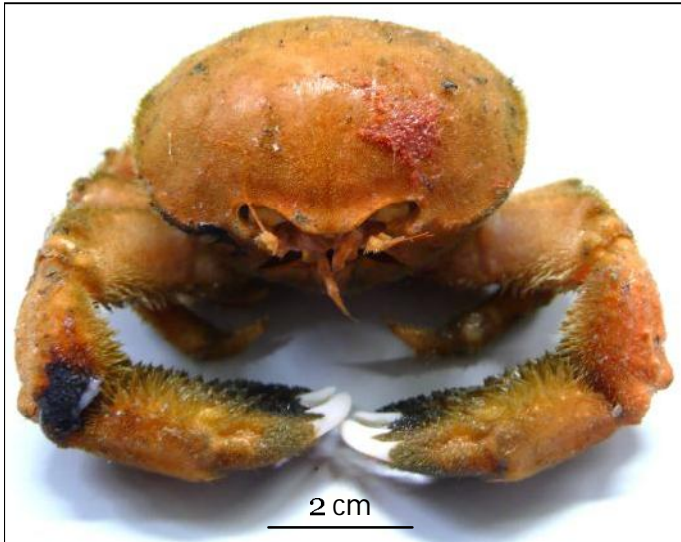
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Muscat, off As Seeb.

Gear: Omani trap.

Japanese sponge crab

Fam. Dromiidae

Cryptodromiopsis unidentata (Rüppell, 1830)



Distinguishing features:

1. Carapace as wide as long;
2. Antero-lateral borders without teeth;
3. Rostrum tridentate, median tooth small, strongly deflexed, not visible dorsally;
4. Cheliped palm smooth, fingers strongly down curved.

Habitat:

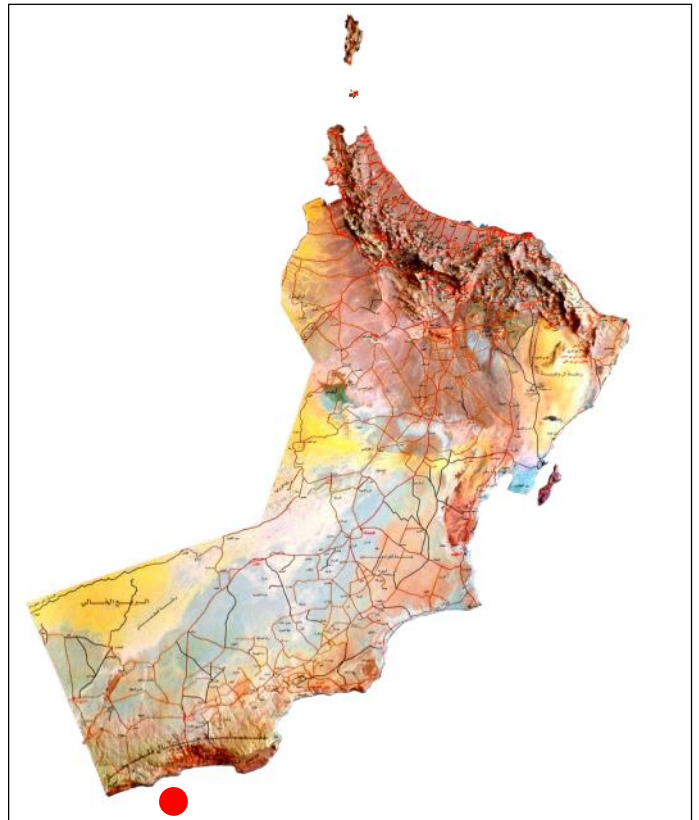
Depth range: 330-480 meters deep.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.



Omani records: The Arabian Sea: Dhofar: off Mughsayl.

Gear: trawl.

Sponge crab

Family Homolidae

Homola sp.



Distinguishing features:

1. Carapace longer than broad, trapezoid;
2. Rostrum is simple; rostral eave has 4 spines;
3. Front has 5 spines;
4. Chelipeds slender, almost equal; merus of chelipeds have spines.

Habitat: soft bottom.

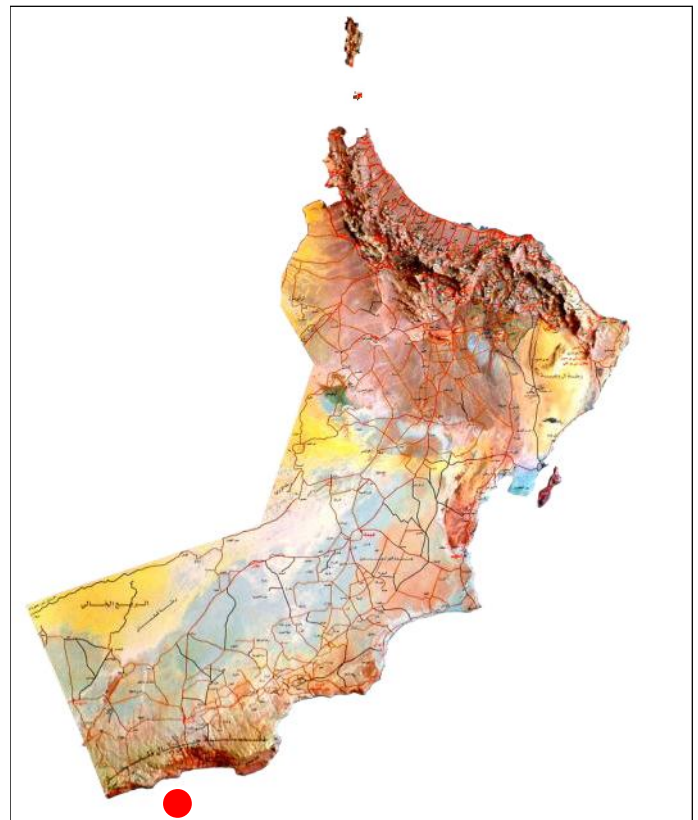
Depth range: from 442 to 787 m.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.
2. P.K.L. Ng. Crabs. pp. 1046- 1155. In: FAO species identification guide for fishery purpose. The living marine resources of the Western Central Pacific. Volume 2. Cephalopods, crustaceans, holothurians and sharks. Carpenter, K.E.; Niem, V.H. (eds.). Rome, FAO. 1998. 687-1396 p.



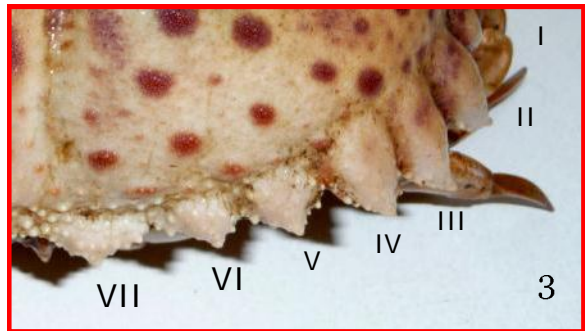
Omani records: The Arabian Sea: Dhofar: off Salalah.

Gear: trawl.

Carrier crab

Fam. Calappidae

Calappa japonica Ortmann, 1892



Distinguishing features:

1. Length of carapace about 0.65 times of its width;
2. Carapace surface tuberculated;
3. Clupeiform expansions have seven sharp teeth.

Habitat: in sandy-muddy areas.

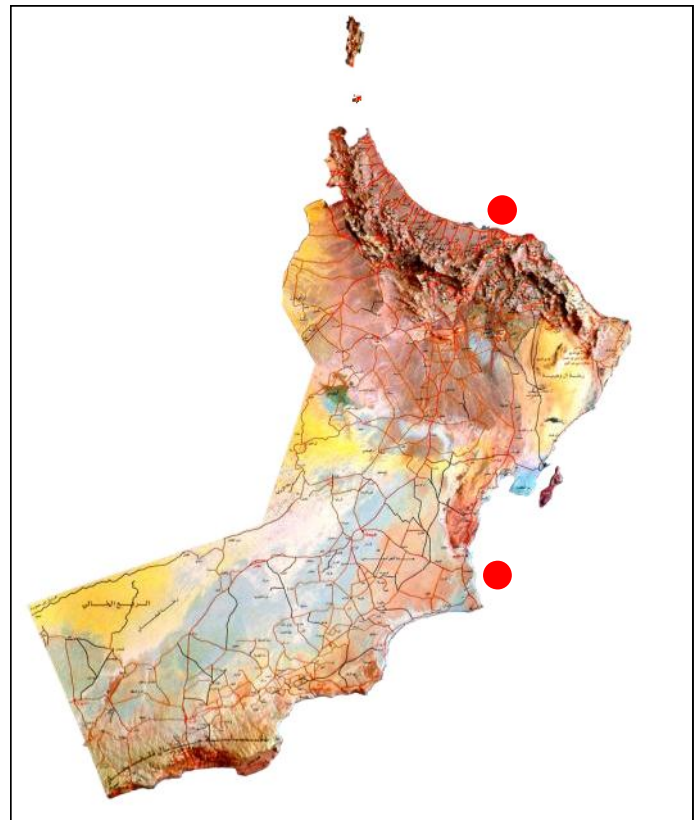
Depth range: from depths of 10 to 163 m.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: irregularly sold in markets.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.
2. P.K.L. Ng. Crabs. pp. 1046- 1155. In: FAO species identification guide for fishery purpose. The living marine resources of the Western Central Pacific. Volume 2. Cephalopods, crustaceans, holothurians and sharks. Carpenter, K.E.; Niem, V.H. (eds.). Rome, FAO. 1998. 687-1396 p.



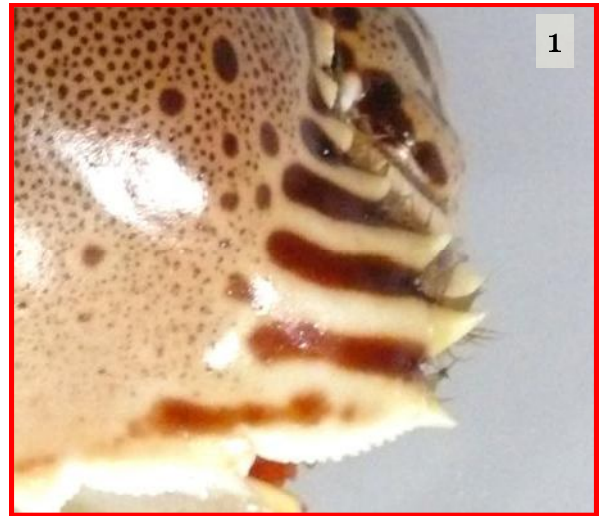
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Muscat, off As Seeb; The Arabian Sea: Al-Wusta: off Duqm.

Gear: Omani trap, trawl.

Japanese shame faced crab

Fam. Calappidae

Calappa lophos Herbst, 1785



Distinguishing features:

1. Carapace has purple lines on lateral regions;
2. Purple spots on median and posterior regions in life.

Habitat: in sandy - muddy areas.

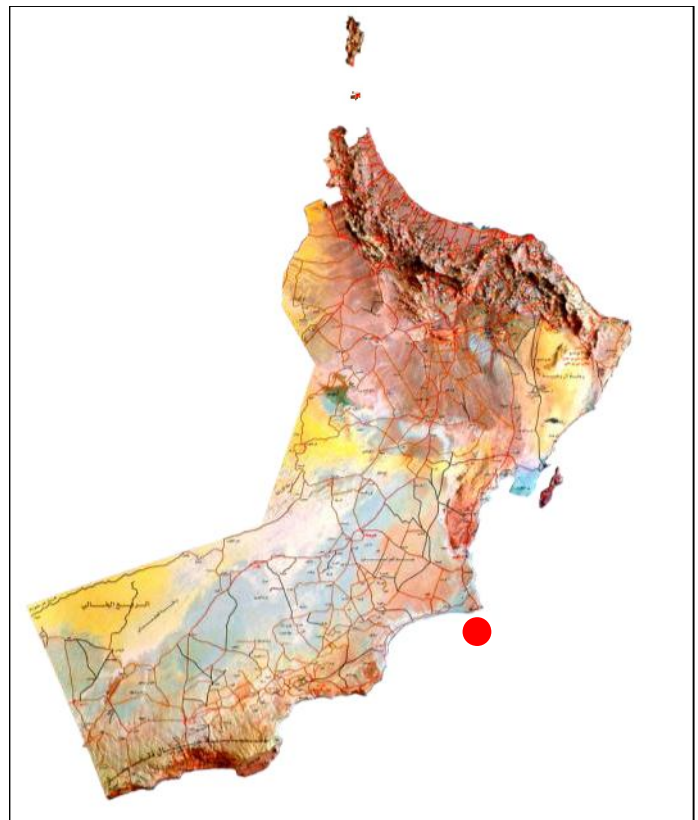
Depth range: 58 - 60 m.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: Irregularly sold in markets, like most of the larger species of *Calappa*.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.
2. P.K.L. Ng. Crabs. pp. 1046- 1155. In: FAO species identification guide for fishery purpose. The living marine resources of the Western Central Pacific. Volume 2. Cephalopods, crustaceans, holothurians and sharks. Carpenter, K.E.; Niem, V.H. (eds.). Rome, FAO. 1998. 687-1396 p.



Omani records: The Arabian Sea: Al-Wusta: south Ras Madrakah.

Gear: trawl.

Common box crab

Fam. Calappidae
Calappa gallus (Herbst, 1803)



Distinguishing features:

1. Carapace surface tuberculated;
2. Antero-lateral borders without wart-like tubercle;
3. Clupeiform expansions of carapace have broad teeth.

Habitat: In sandy-muddy areas.

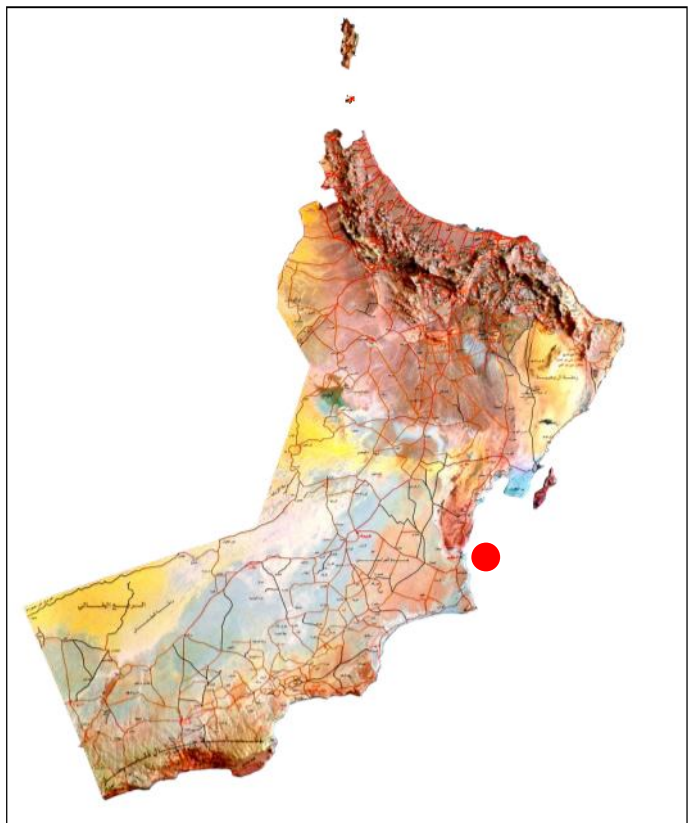
Depth range: from depths of 10 to 100 m.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: Irregularly sold in markets, like most of the larger species of *Calappa*.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.
2. P.K.L. Ng. Crabs. pp. 1046- 1155. In: FAO species identification guide for fishery purpose. The living marine resources of the Western Central Pacific. Volume 2. Cephalopods, crustaceans, holothurians and sharks. Carpenter, K.E.; Niem, V.H. (eds.). Rome, FAO. 1998. 687-1396 p.



Omani records: The Arabian Sea: Al-Wusta: Duqm.

Gear: trawl.

Rough box crab

Fam. Calappidae
Calappa hepatica (Linnaeus, 1758)



Distinguishing features:

1. Length of carapace much less than two thirds of its width;
2. Carapace surface clearly tuberculated;
3. Clypeiform expansions of carapace with broad teeth.

Habitat: sandy to slightly muddy substrates.

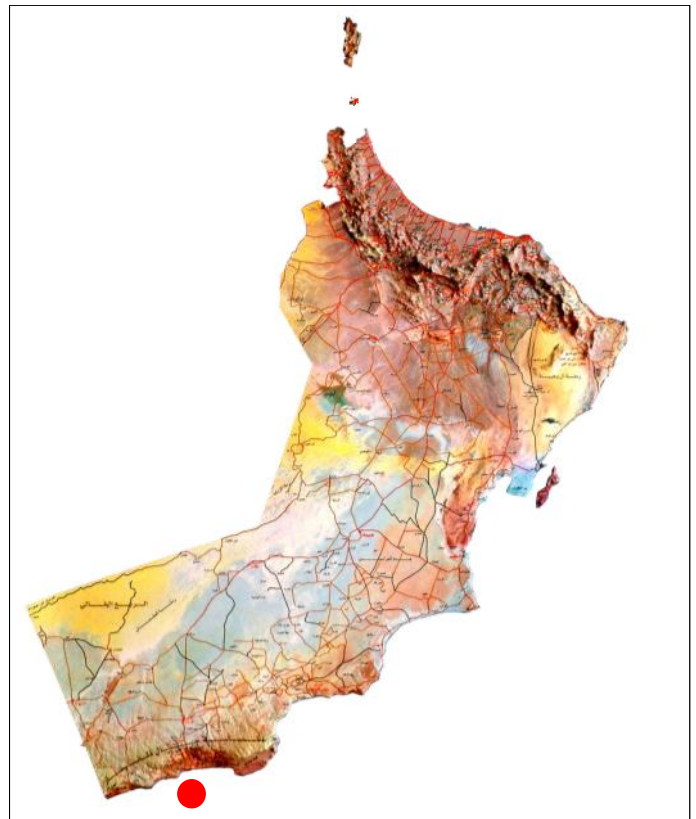
Depth range: at depths from 10 to 100 m.

Distribution: Indo-West Pacific.

Importance to humans: caught for food in many parts of its range but nowhere very important and rarely sold in markets.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.
2. P.K.L. Ng. Crabs. pp. 1046- 1155. In: FAO species identification guide for fishery purpose. The living marine resources of the Western Central Pacific. Volume 2. Cephalopods, crustaceans, holothurians and sharks. Carpenter, K.E.; Niem, V.H. (eds.). Rome, FAO. 1998. 687-1396 p.

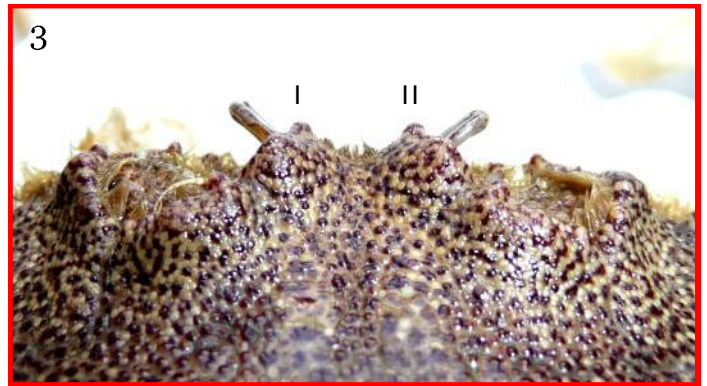


Omani records: The Arabian Sea: Dhofar: off Salalah.

Gear: trawl.

Hepatic box crab

Fam. Calappidae
Calappa philargius (Linnaeus, 1758)



Distinguishing features:

1. Length of carapace about two thirds its width;
2. Posterior border has prominent spines;
3. Front composed of two rounded teeth separated medially by V-shaped sinus.

Habitat: sandy to slightly muddy substrates.

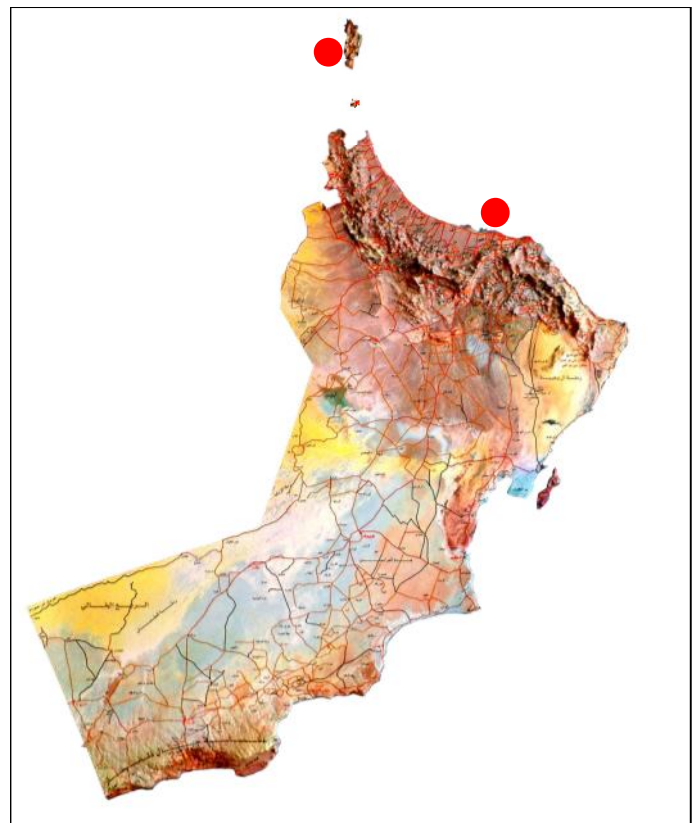
Depth range: at depths from 10 to 100 m.

Distribution: Indo-West Pacific.

Importance to humans: rarely sold in markets.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.
2. P.K.L. Ng. Crabs. pp. 1046- 1155. In: FAO species identification guide for fishery purpose. The living marine resources of the Western Central Pacific. Volume 2. Cephalopods, crustaceans, holothurians and sharks. Carpenter, K.E.; Niem, V.H. (eds.). Rome, FAO. 1998. 687-1396 p.



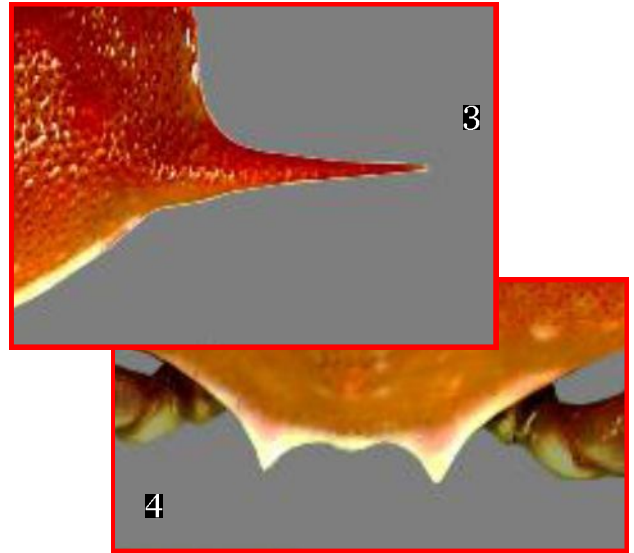
Omani records: The Arabian Gulf: Musandam: Khasab; The Sea of Oman: Muscat.

Gear: Omani trap.

Box crab

Fam. Calappidae

Mursia bicristimana Alcock & Anderson, 1894



Distinguishing features:

1. Carapace about 1.2 times as wide as long, its surface closely granulate and with radial rows of flattened granules;
2. Frontal rostrum triangular, clearly exceeding rounded lateral lobes;
3. Lateral spine of carapace is massive, straight and pointed, about 0.2 times carapace width;
4. Posterior margin bears two sharp teeth.

Habitat:

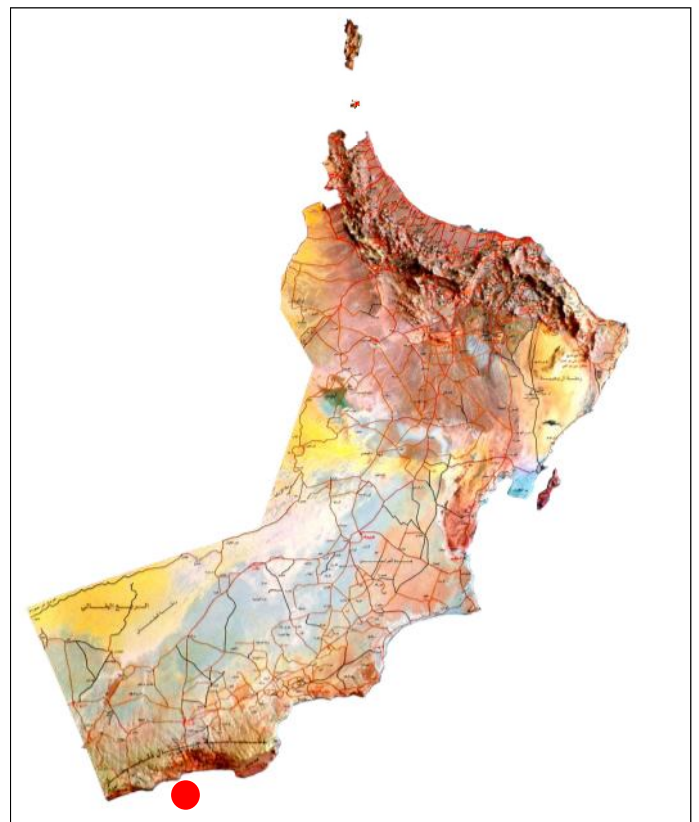
Depth range: 442 - 787 m.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: None.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.
2. V. Spiridonov, M. Appel. 2007. A new species and new records of deep-water Calappidae (Crustacea: Decapoda) from the Indian Ocean with a key to the Mursia Desmarest, 1823 species of the region. Journ. of Natural History, 41(45-48): 2851-2890.

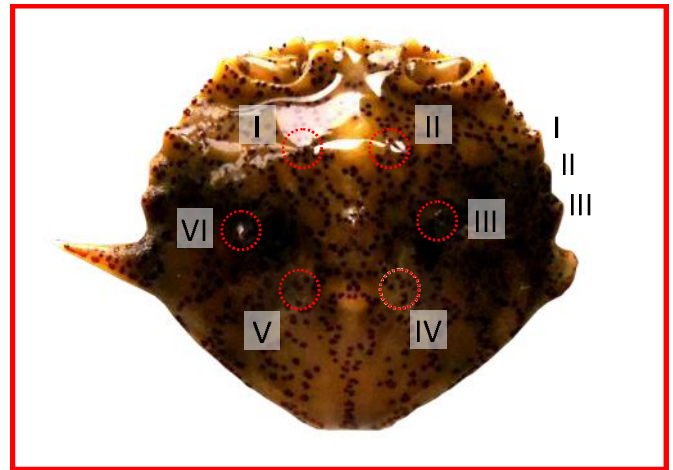
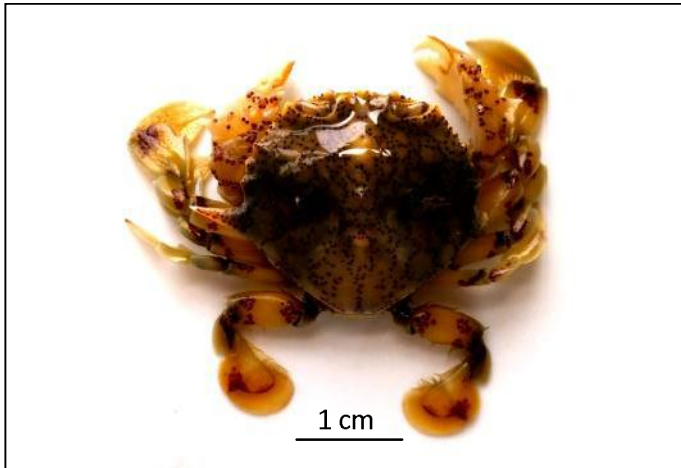


Omani records: The Arabian Sea: Dhofar, off Salalah.

Gear: trawl.

Box crab

Fam. Matutidae
Ashtoret lunaris (Forskål, 1775)



4!

Distinguishing features:

1. Surface of carapace is minutely granular, covered with red dots
2. Carapace has six mid-dorsal tubercles;
3. Antero-lateral margins with five small tubercles followed by three large triangular tubercles;
4. Lateral spine 0.2 times carapace width.

Habitat: Sandy silty shores, especially near seagrasses.

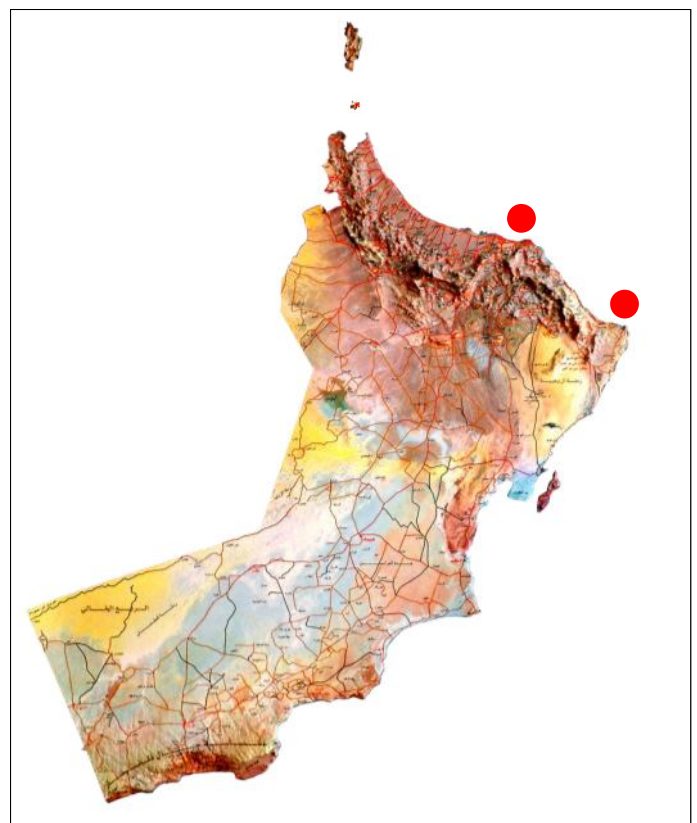
Depth range: 0-3 m.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: None.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.

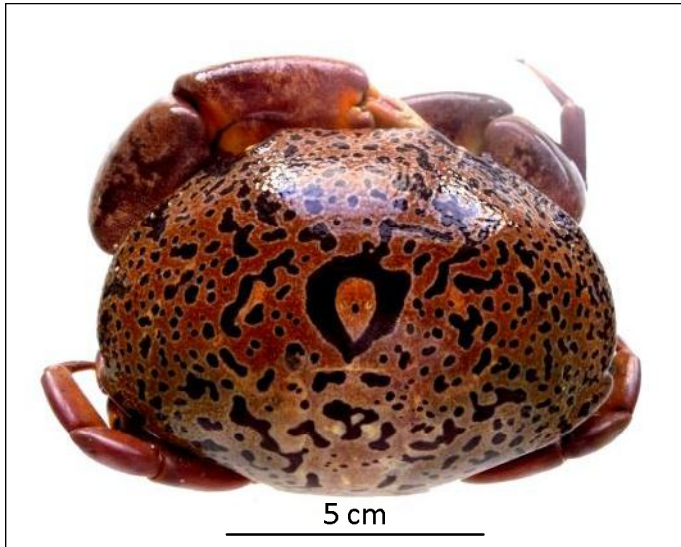


Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Muscat, Qurum; the Arabian Sea: Sharqiah: khawr Grama.

Gear: hands.

Spotted moon crab

Fam. Carpiliidae
Carpilius convexus (Forskål, 1775)



Distinguishing characters:

1. Carapace is convex, smooth;
2. Regions of carapace ill defined;
3. Orbital, hepatic, and branchial regions are marked with fine net-like corrugation.
4. Chelipeds are stout, asymmetrical. Carpus has inner-distal angle obtuse.

Habitat: corall reefs.

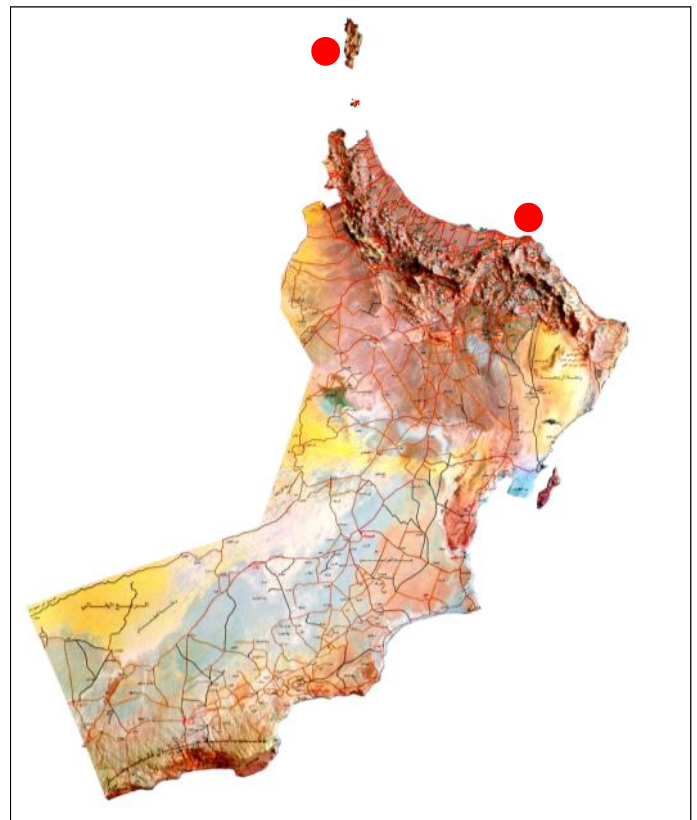
Depth range:

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: not edible

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.



Omani records: Arabian Gulf: Musandam: Khasab. The Sea of Oman: Muscat.

Gear: trap.

Red reef crab

Fam. Eriphiidae
Eriphia sebana (Shaw & Nodder, 1803)



Distinguishing features:

1. Outer surface of palm smooth.

Habitat: reef and rock species.

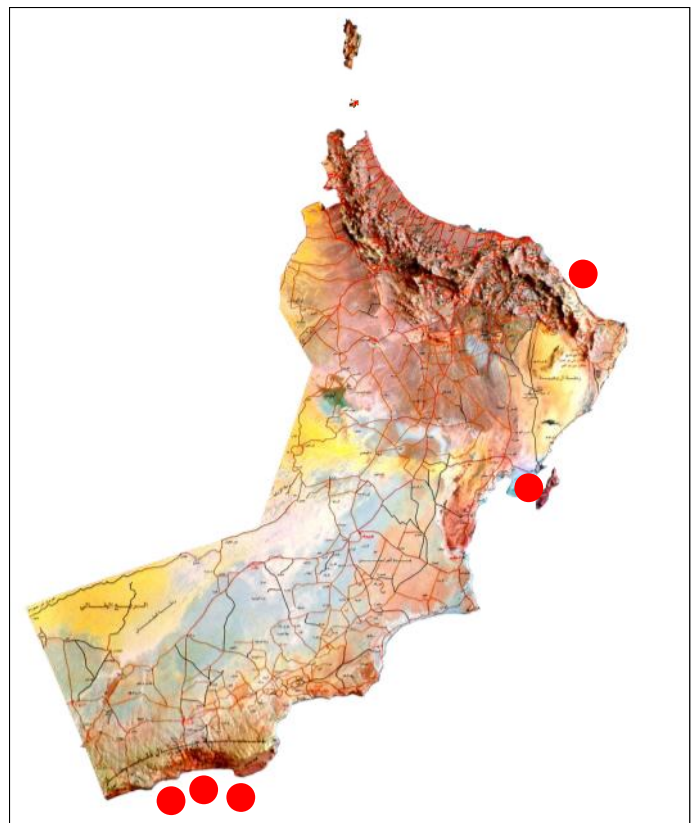
Depth range: intertidal areas.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: low fishery value.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.
2. P.K.L. Ng. Crabs. pp. 1046- 1155. In: FAO species identification guide for fishery purpose. The living marine resources of the Western Central Pacific. Volume 2. Cephalopods, crustaceans, holothurians and sharks. Carpenter, K.E.; Niem, V.H. (eds.). Rome, FAO. 1998. 687-1396 p.



Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Sharqiya, The Arabian Sea: Al Wusta: the Island of Masira; Dhofar, Mughsail, Taquah, Mirbat

Gear: hands.

Red eyed crab

Fam. Eriphiidae
Eriphia smithii MacLeay, 1838



Distinguishing features:

1. Outer surface of palm rough.

Habitat: reef and rock species.

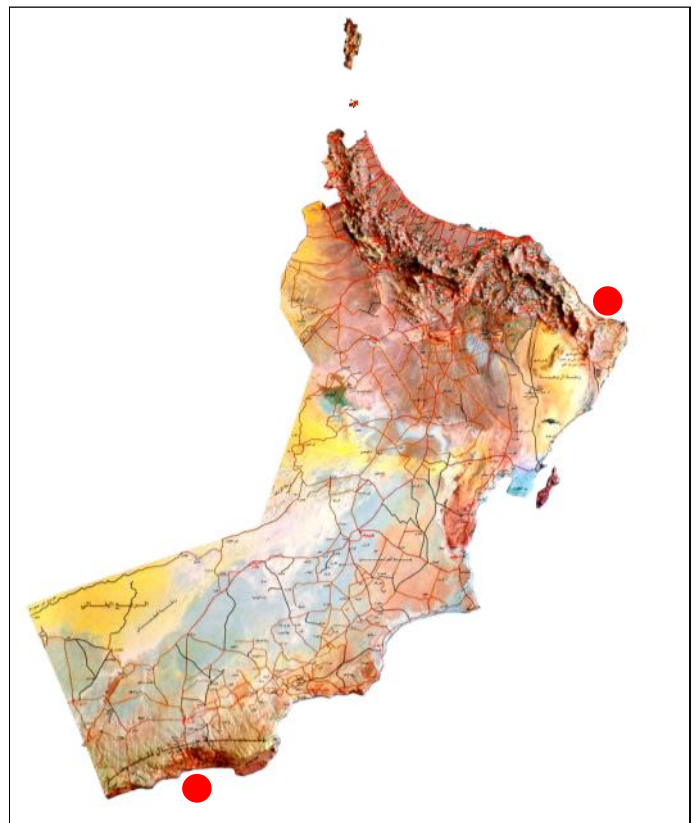
Depth range: intertidal areas.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: low fishery value.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.
2. P.K.L. Ng. Crabs. pp. 1046- 1155. In: FAO species identification guide for fishery purpose. The living marine resources of the Western Central Pacific. Volume 2. Cephalopods, crustaceans, holothurians and sharks. Carpenter, K.E.; Niem, V.H. (eds.). Rome, FAO. 1998. 687-1396 p.



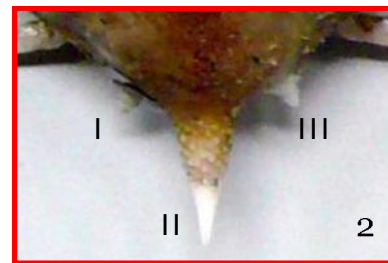
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Sharqiya: Khawr Grama; The Arabian Sea: Dhofar: Taquah.

Gear: hands.

Rough red eyed crab

Fam. Leucosiidae

Arcania sp.



Distinguishing features:

1. Carapace is oval, convex, slightly longer than broad; front slightly projected;
2. Posterior margin has 3 spines, the median one longer has granules at base;
3. Chelipeds symmetrical, merus subcylindrical with fine granules.

Habitat: muddy bottom.

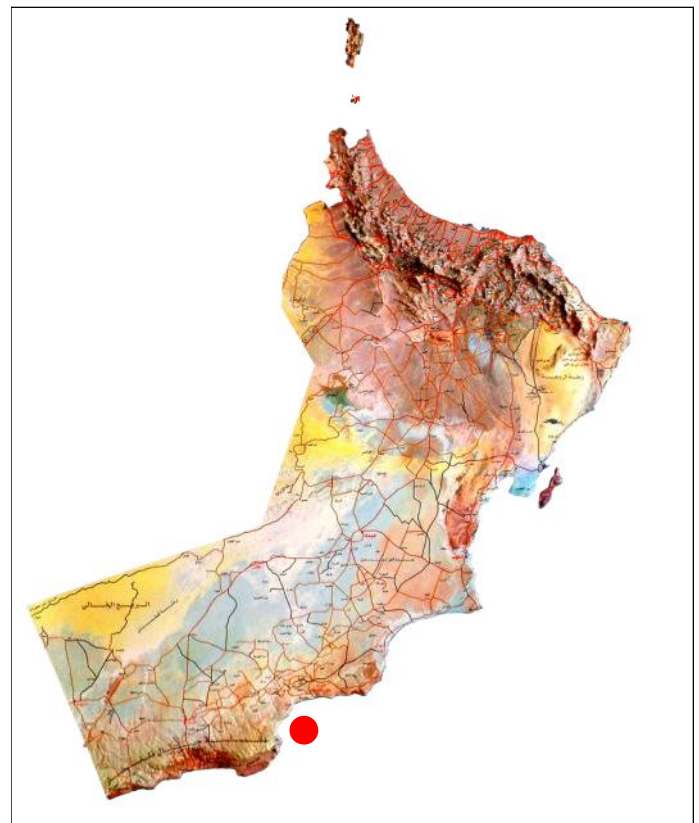
Depth range: 58-62 m.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.



Omani records: The Arabian Sea: Dhofar, off Ash Shuwaymiah.

Gear: trawl.

Purse crab

Fam. Leucosiidae

Bellidilia undecimspinosa (Kinahan, 1856)



Distinguishing features:

1. Carapace is convex;
2. Posterior margin has 6 spines;

Habitat: soft bottom.

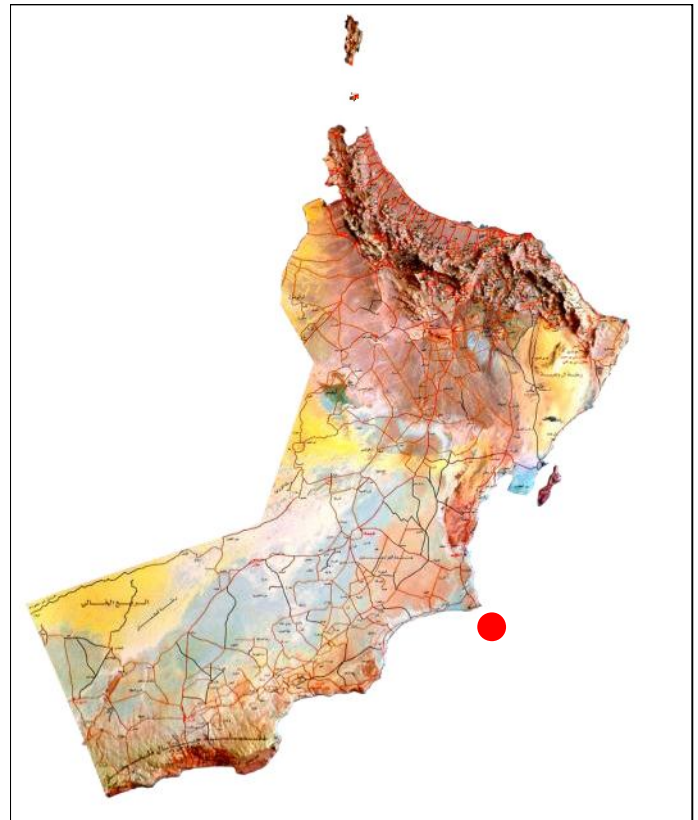
Depth range: 105–108 m.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.

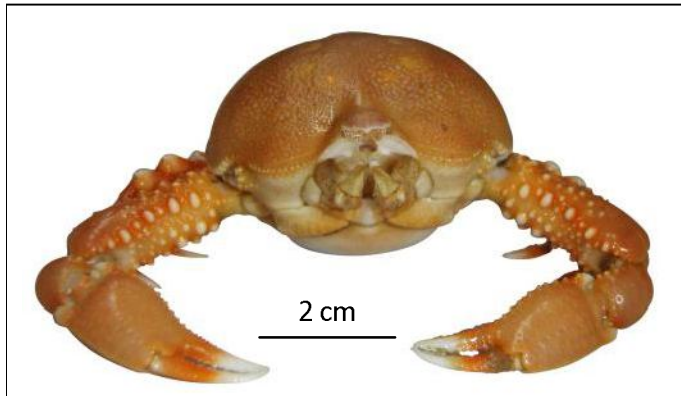


Omani records: The Arabian Sea: Al - Wusta: Ras Madrasah

Gear: trawl.

Purse crab

Fam. Leucosiidae
Euclisia obtusifrons De Haan, 1841



Distinguishing features:

1. The carapace is slightly longer than broad;
2. The upper surface is smooth but it is minutely punctate toward the anterior surface;
3. Chelipeds are massive, the tubercles found on the arm.

Habitat:

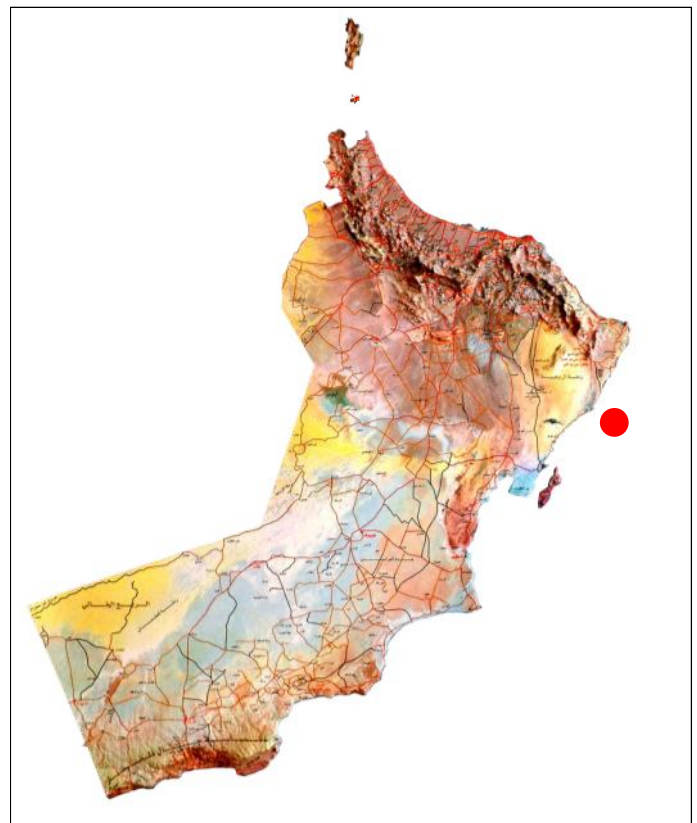
Depth range:

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: None.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.
2. P.K.L. Ng. Crabs. pp. 1046- 1155. In: FAO species identification guide for fishery purpose. The living marine resources of the Western Central Pacific. Volume 2. Cephalopods, crustaceans, holothurians and sharks. Carpenter, K.E.; Niem, V.H. (eds.). Rome, FAO. 1998. 687-1396 p.



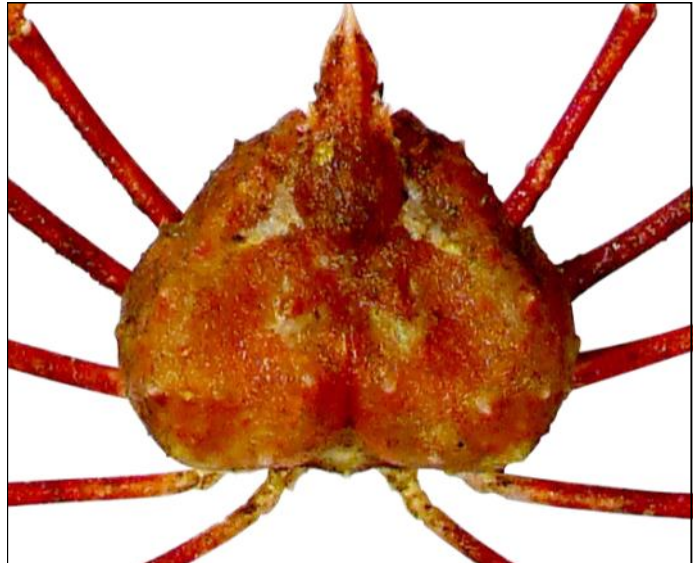
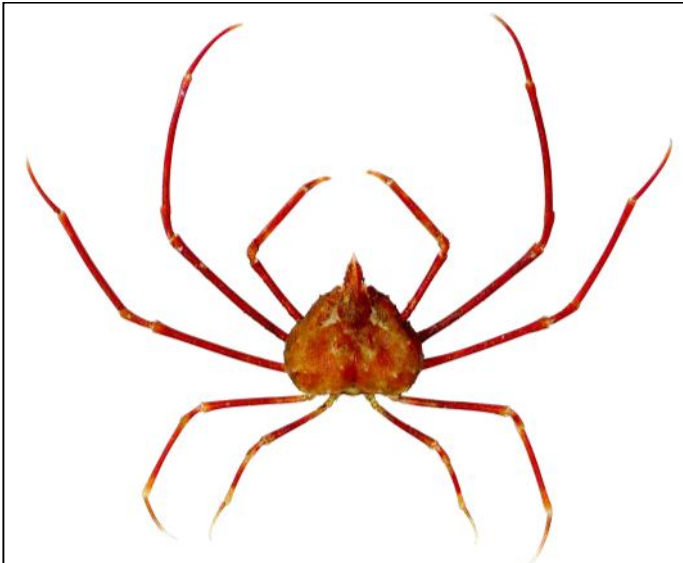
Omani records: The Arabian Sea: Al - Wusta: south off Al Ashkharah.

Gear: trawl.

Purse crab

Fam. Majidae

Encephaloides armstrongi Wood-Mason, 1890



Distinguishing features:

1. Carapace is pyriform, slightly granulated;
2. Rostrum is prominent, acute;
3. 7 antero-lateral spinules;
4. Chelipeds are sub equal, in comparison to walking legs relatively small, slender.
5. Ambulatory legs are cylindrical, granulated, decreasing in size from front to rear.

Habitat: muddy bottom.

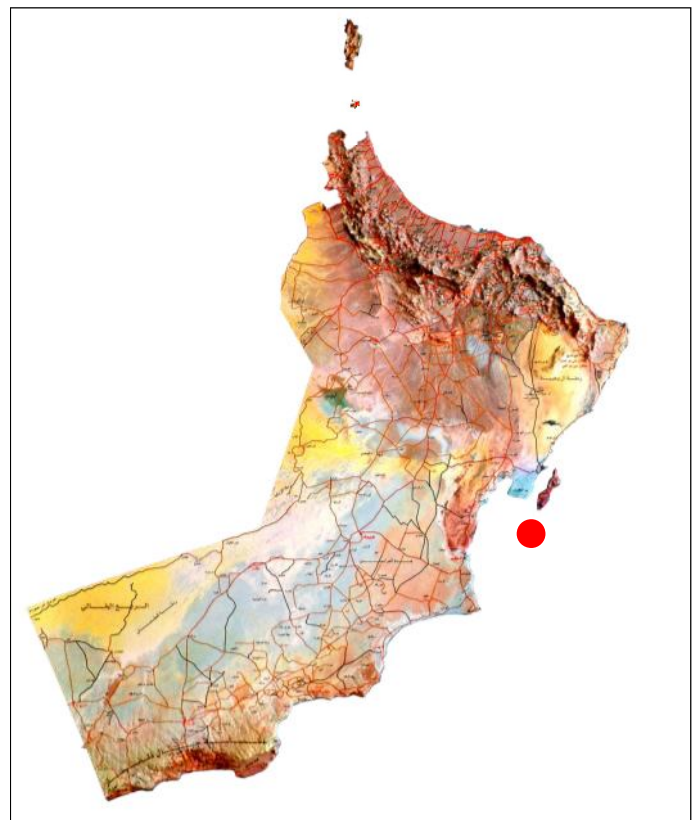
Depth range: from 150 to 1000 m.

Distribution: north-western Indian Ocean.

Importance to humans: None.

Key references:

1. Creasey S., Rogers A. D., Tyler P., Young C. and Gage J. 1997. The population biology and genetics of the deep-sea spider crab, *Encephaloides armstrongi* Wood-Mason 1890 (Decapoda: Majidae). Phil. Trans. R. Soc. Lond. B, 352, 365-379



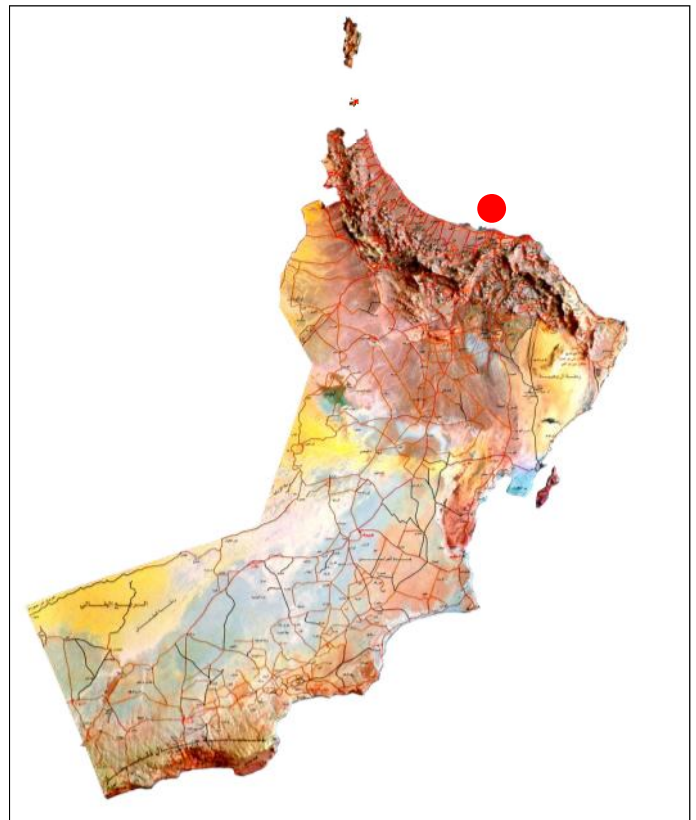
Omani records:

The Arabian sea: Al Wusta: off the Island of Masira

Gear: trawl.

Armstrong's spider crab

Fam. Majidae
Hyastenus diacanthus (De Haan, 1837)



Distinguishing features:

1. The body and appendages are densely covered with soft tomentum;
2. The carapace behind orbital region is triangular in outline.

Habitat: Rocky bottom.

Depth range: 150-170m.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.

Key references:

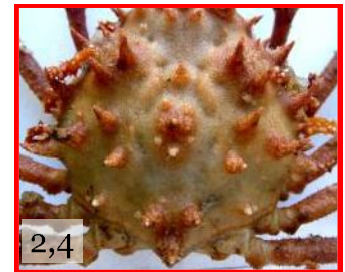
1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.

Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Muscat: off As Seeb.

Gear: Omani trap.

Decorator crab

Fam. Majidae
Naxioides robillardi (Miers, 1882)



Distinguishing features:

1. Supraorbital eave has an upright preorbital spine, usually long;
2. Carapace with long spines; cardiac region with a single medial spine;
3. Antero - orbital lobe of eave is directed laterally;
4. Hepatic margin has one long spine.

Habitat: Rocky bottom.

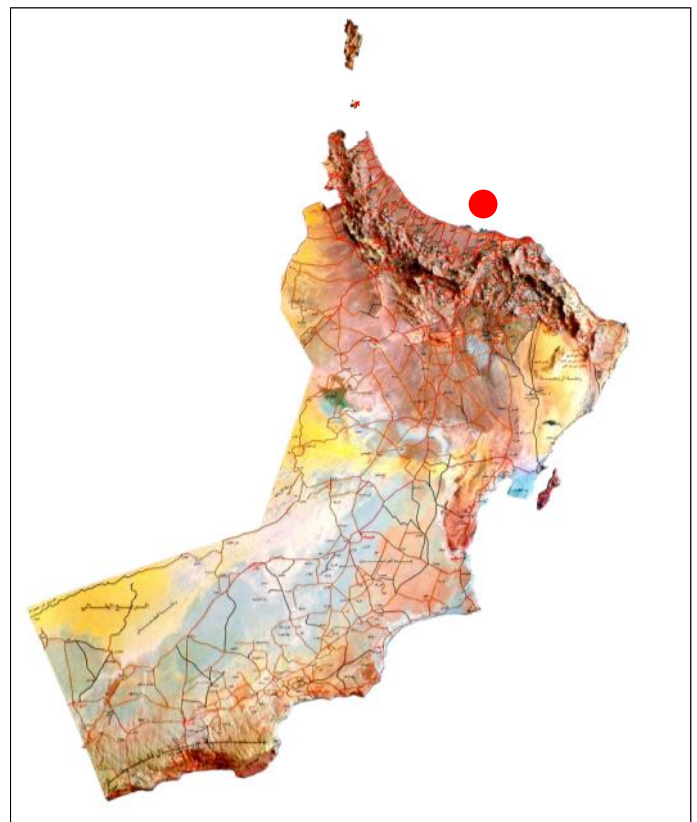
Depth range: 150-170m.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: None.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.

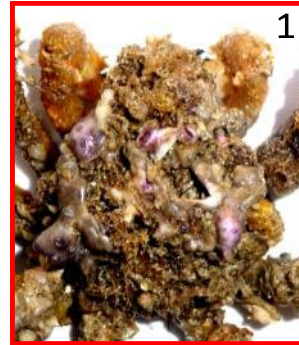


Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Muscat, off As Seeb.

Gear: Omani trap.

Decorator crab

Fam. Majidae
Camposcia retusa Latreille, 1829



Distinguishing features:

1. Carapace is pyriform, dorsally smooth;
2. Chelipeds are shorter than any of the ambulatory legs.

Habitat: corals.

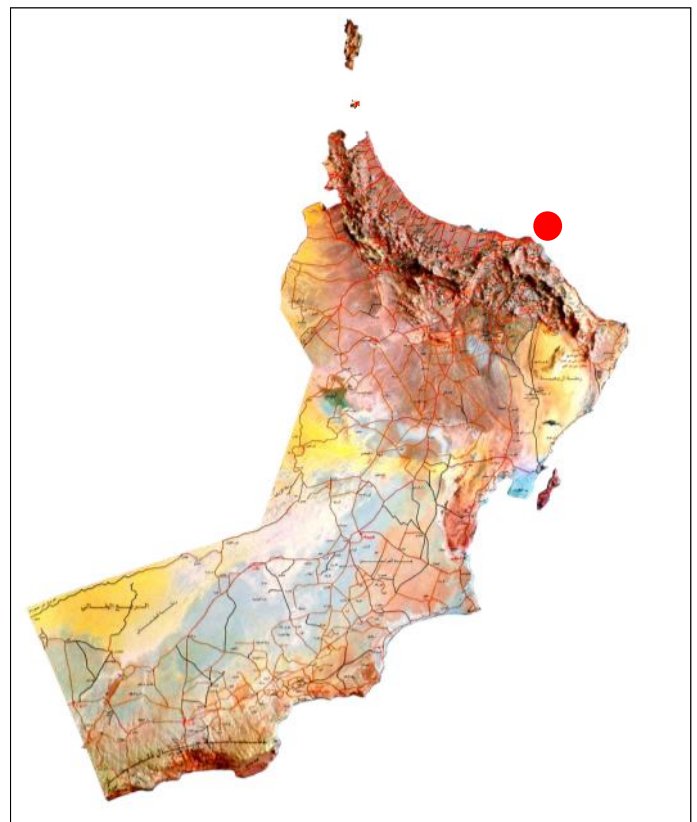
Depth range: littoral.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific

Importance to humans: aquarium culture

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.



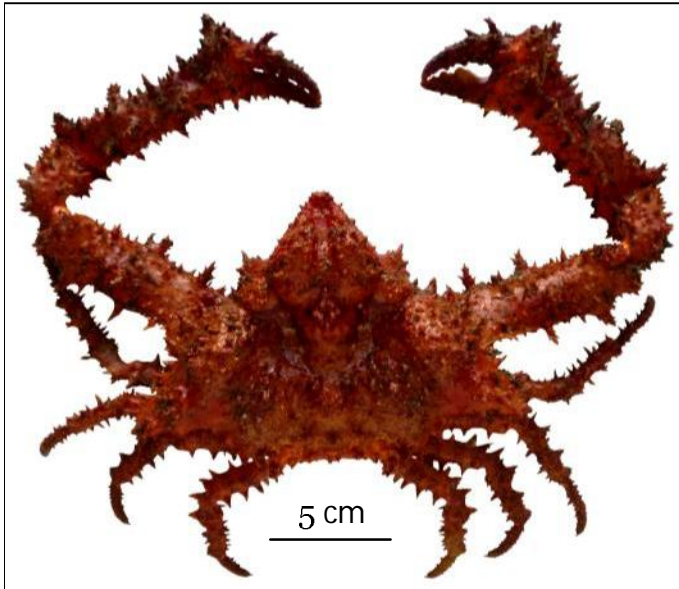
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Muscat: Bandar Rowdha,

Gear: hands.

Velcro crab

Fam. Parthenopidae

Daldorfia spinosissima (A. Milne Edwards, 1862)



Distinguishing features:

1. Species of a large size;
2. Carapace and chelipeds are thickly armed with sharp spines and spinules;
3. Carapace is sharply triangular in outline;
4. Merus and propodus of chelipeds are slender.

Habitat: rocky bottom.

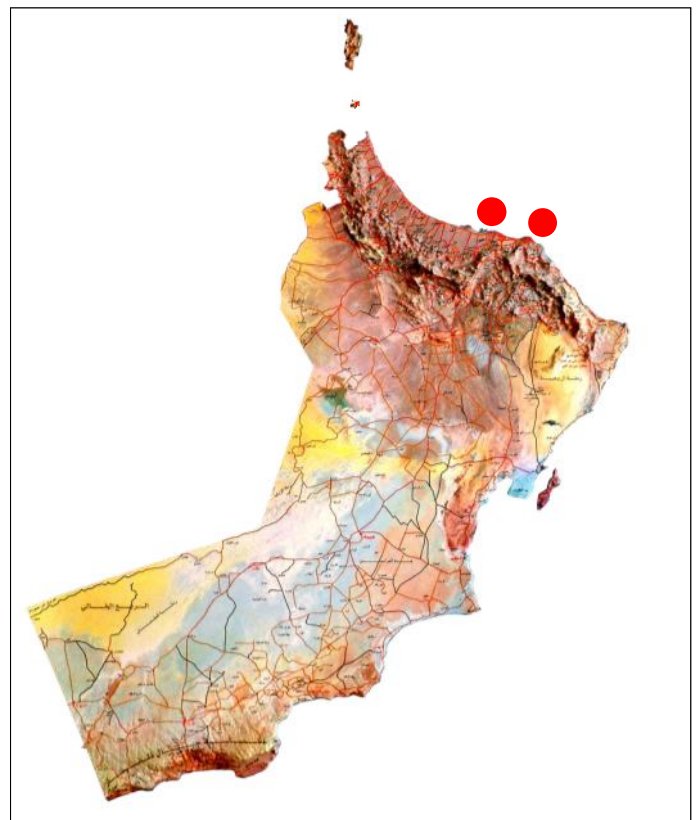
Depth range: 100 m.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.



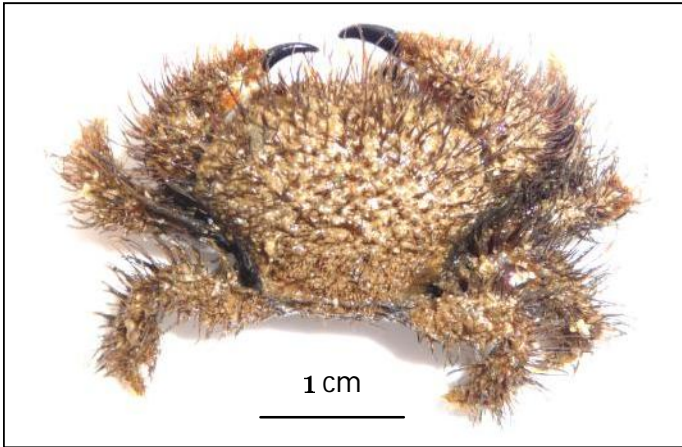
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Muscat: off As Seeb.

Gear: Omani trap.

Parthenopid crab

Fam. Pilumnidae

Nanopilumnus heterodon Sakai, 1934



Distinguishing features:

1. Dorsal surface of carapace is not granulated and the regions are ill-defined.

Habitat: rocky shore.

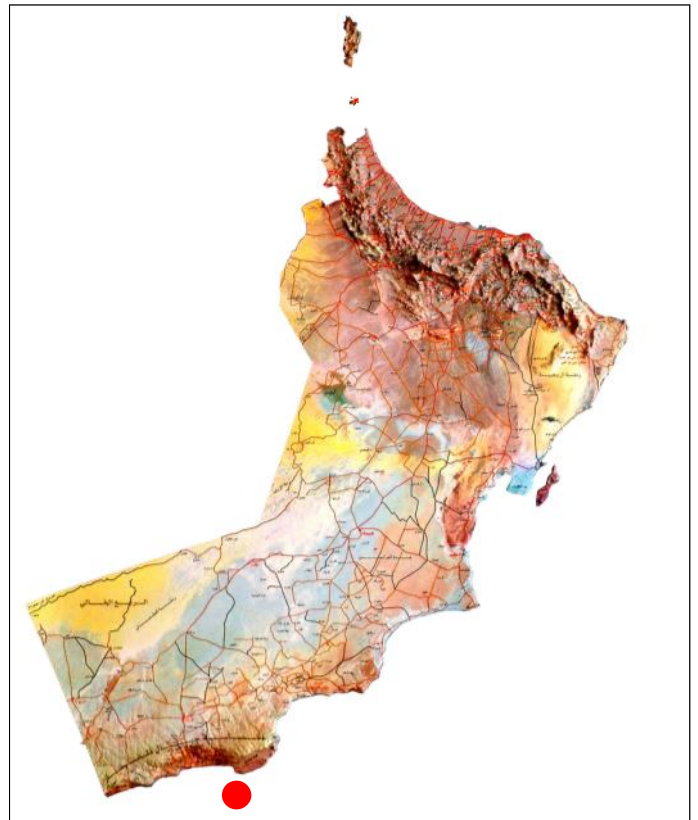
Depth range: intertidal.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific;

Importance to humans: none.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adja-



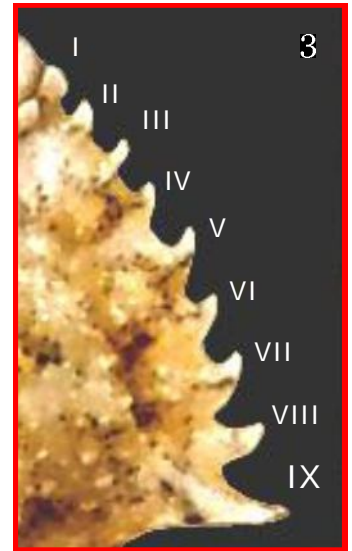
Omani records: The Arabian Sea: Dhofar: Mirbat.

Gear: hands.

Hairy crab

Fam. Portunidae

Portunus petreus (Alcock, 1899)



Distinguishing features:

1. Carapace is moderately broad (breadth about 1.5-1.6 times length);
2. Front has 4 lobes, medians much lower than laterals;
3. Antero-lateral borders have 9 teeth.

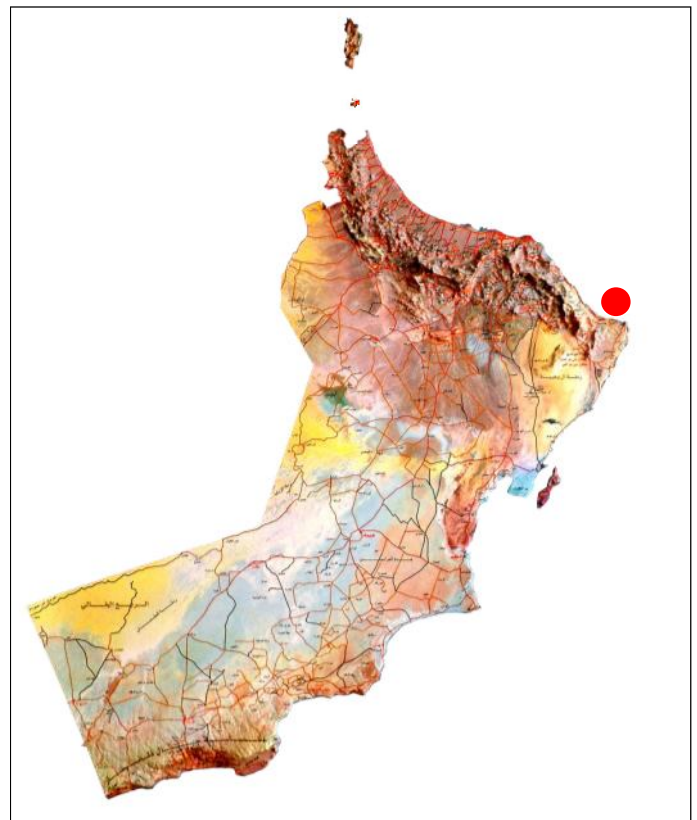
Habitat: sandy bottom.

Depth range: littoral.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific .

Importance to humans: none.

Key references:



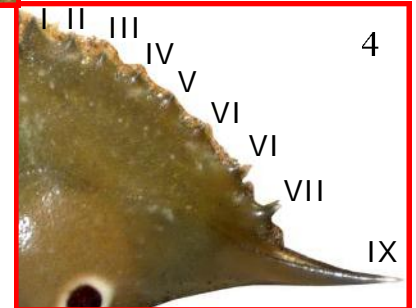
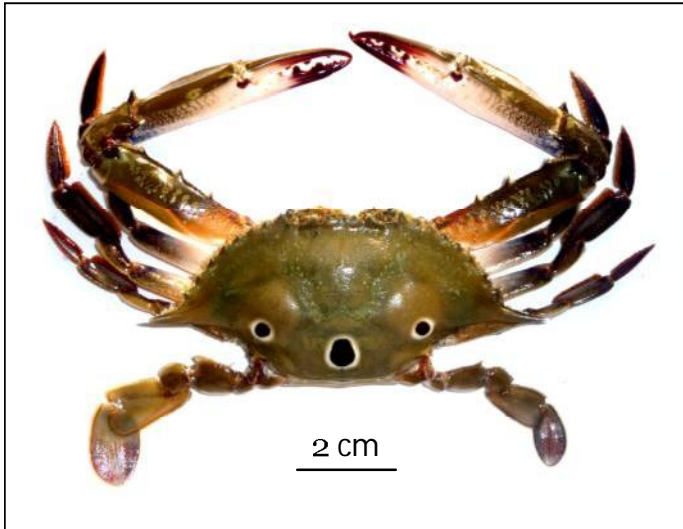
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Sharqiyah: Khawr Heiger.

Gear: hands.

Swimming crab

Fam. Portunidae

Portunus sanguinolentus (Herbst, 1783)



Distinguishing features:

1. Carapace is very broad (breadth 2.0-2.5 times length), with 3 red spots in posterior half;
2. Front with 4 triangular teeth;
3. Antero-lateral borders has 9 teeth;

Habitat: bays, estuaries and intertidal areas preferring sandy or muddy bottoms.

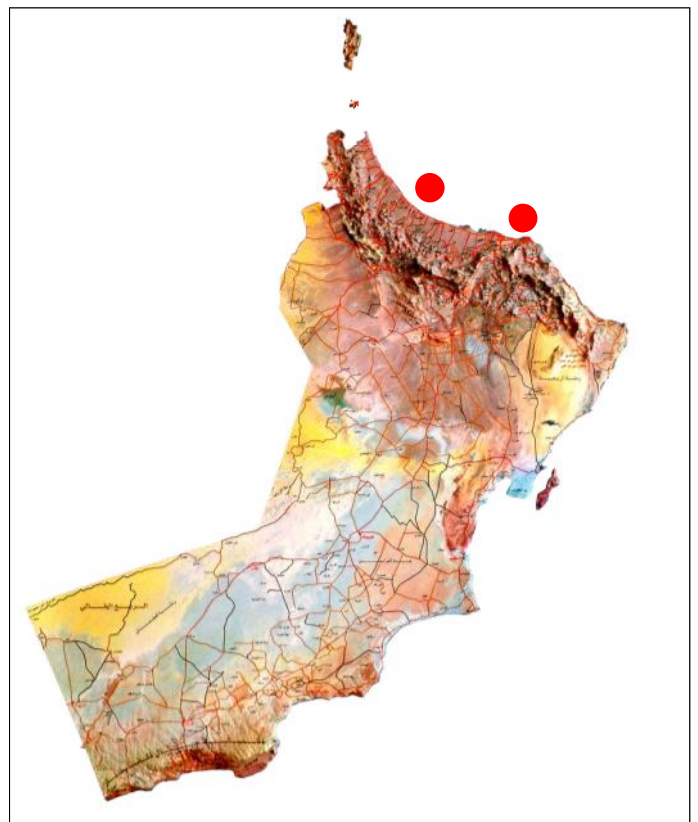
Depth range: to depths of 60m.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: **BASIS OF IMPORTANT COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHERIES.**

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.
2. P.K.L. Ng. Crabs. pp. 1046- 1155. In: FAO species identification guide for fishery purpose. The living marine resources of the



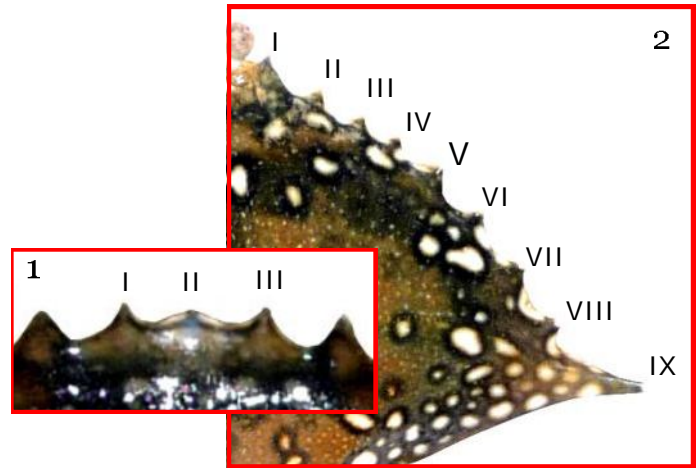
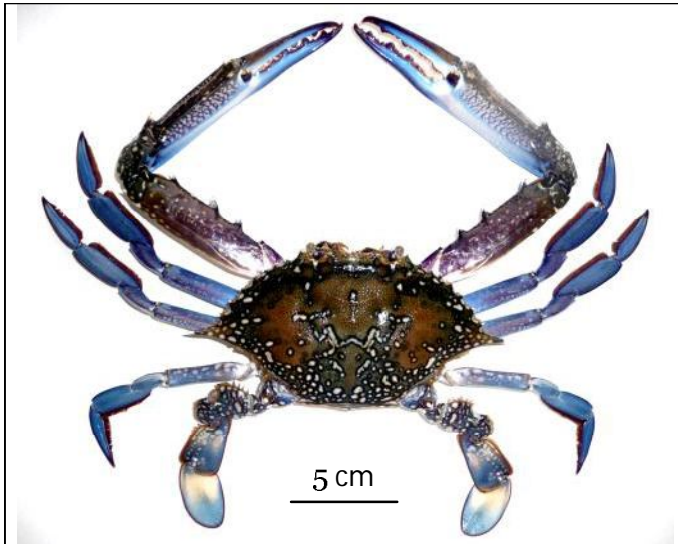
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Batinah: Sohar, Shinas; Muscat.

Gear: traps.

Blood spotted crab

Fam. Portunidae

Portunus segnis (Forskål, 1775)



Distinguishing features:

1. Median teeth frontal teeth minute, inconspicuous, almost obsolete;
2. Antero-lateral borders with 9 teeth, last one very large and projecting straight out laterally.

Habitat: sandy or muddy bottoms.

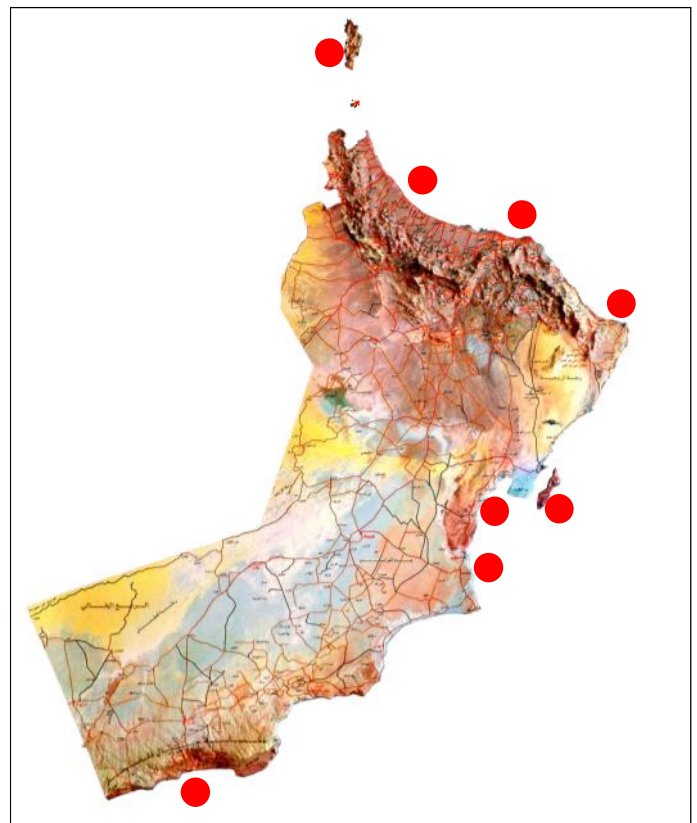
Depth range: to depths of 60m.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: **BASIS OF IMPORTANT COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHERIES.**

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.
2. Lai J.C.Y., Ng P.K.L., DAVIE P.J.F., 2010. A revision of the *Portunus pelagicus* (Linnaeus, 1758) species complex (Crustacea: Decapoda: Portunidae), with the recognition of four spe-



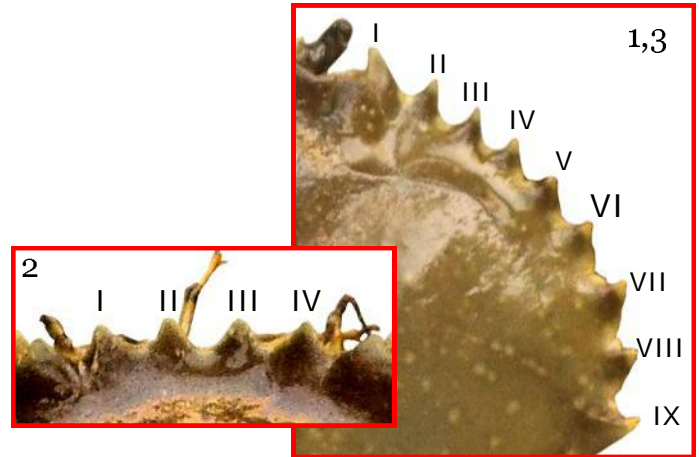
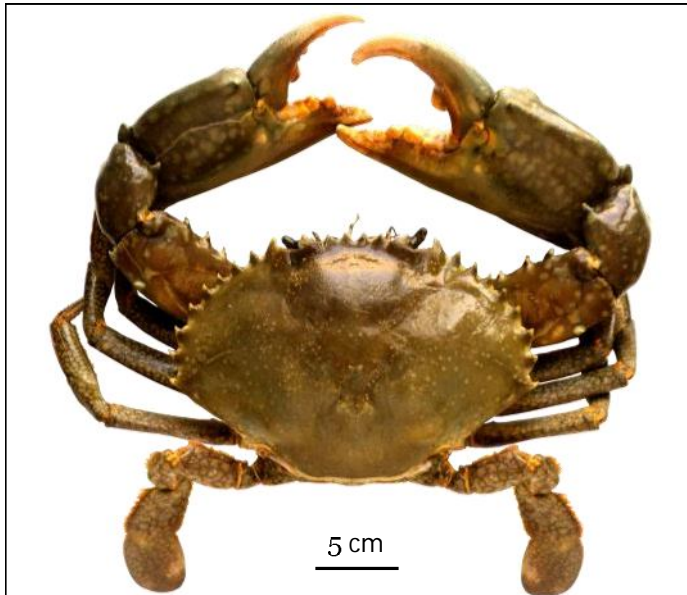
Omani records: Arabian Gulf: Khasab. The Sea of Oman: Batinah, Muscat, Sharkiyah. The Arabian sea: Al Wusta: the Island of Masira; Dhofar: off Raysut, khawr Rowri.

Gear: traps.

Flower (sand) crab

Fam. Portunidae

Scylla serrata (Forskål, 1775)



Distinguishing features:

1. Carapace is smooth and glabrous;
2. Front with 4 subequal and equally spaced teeth;
3. Antero-lateral borders has 9 teeth.

Habitat: estuarine and coastal waters incorporating areas of mangrove and mud flats.

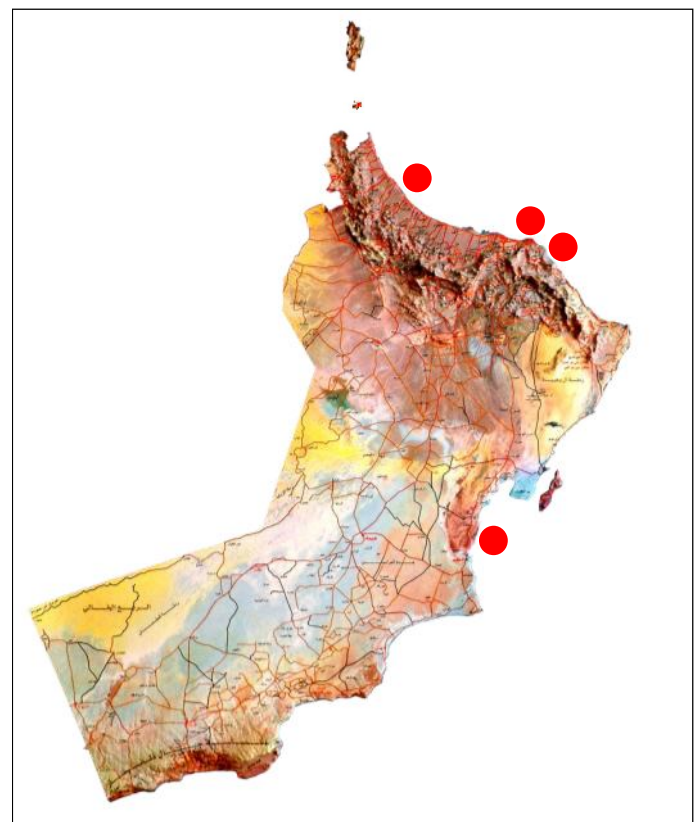
Depth range: from shallows to 50 km offshore.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: **BASIS OF IMPORTANT COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHERIES.**

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.
2. P.K.L. Ng. Crabs. pp. 1046- 1155. In: FAO species identification guide for fishery purpose. The living marine resources of the

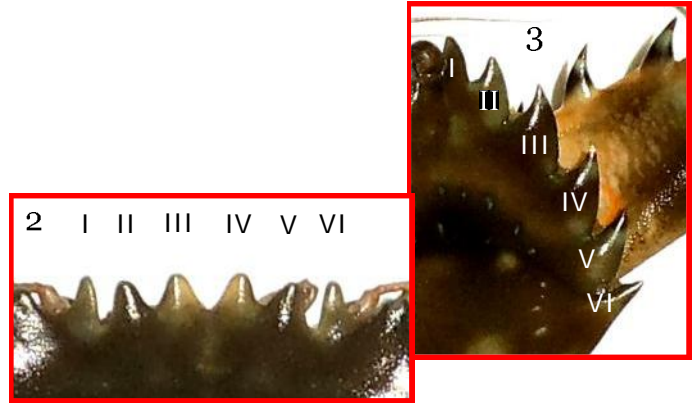


Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Muscat: Bandar Kheiran, Yiti; Batinah: Sohar; the Arabian Sea: Al Wusta: Ad Duqm.

Giant mangrove (mud) crab

Fam. Portunidae

Charybdis annulata (Fabricius, 1798)



Distinguishing features:

1. Carapace pubescent;
2. Front with 6 triangular subacute teeth;
3. Antero-lateral borders with 6 teeth, first and second smaller than the following ones and subequal;

Habitat: muddy bottom.

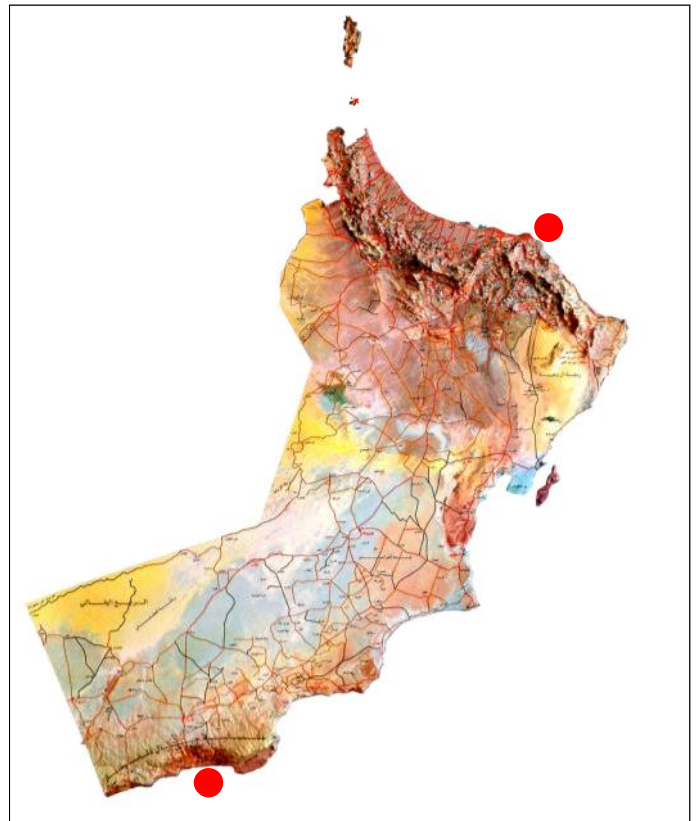
Depth range: littoral.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.
2. Apel, M. & V.A. Spiridonov, 1998. Taxonomy



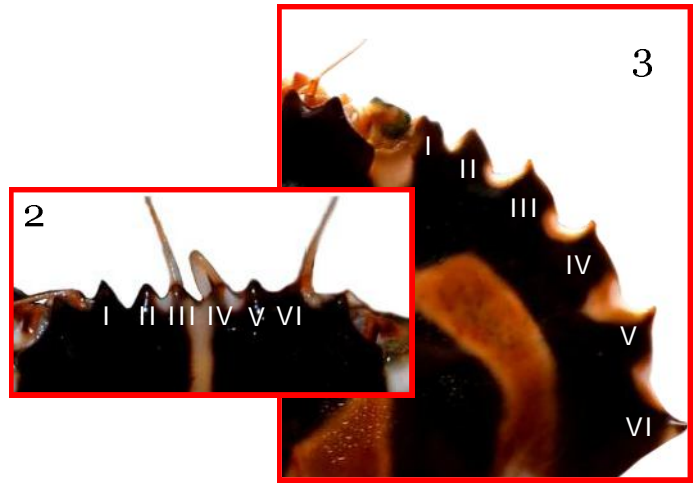
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Muscat: Nadi Al Yahud. The Arabian Sea: Dhofar: Khawr Rowri.

Gear: hands, trap.

Swimming crab

Fam. Portunidae

Charybdis feriata (Linneus, 1758)



Distinguishing features:

1. Carapace is glabrous;
2. Front has 6 subequal triangular rounded teeth;
3. Antero-lateral borders have 6 teeth;

Habitat: sandy to sandy-muddy substrates.

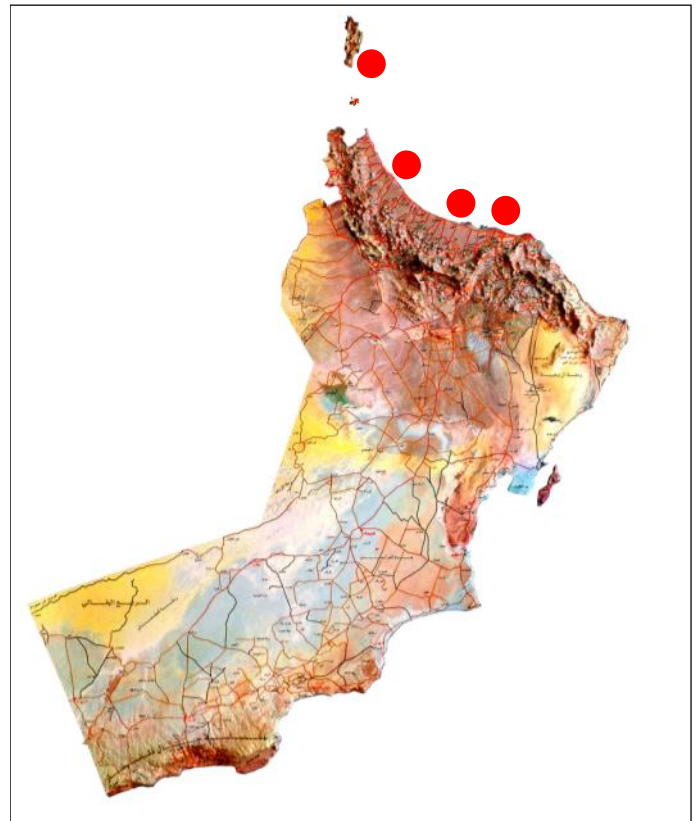
Depth range: at depths from 30 to 60 m.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: **COMMERCIAL-
LY THE MOST IMPORTANT SPECIES OF
CHARYBDIS.**

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.
2. P.K.L. Ng. Crabs. pp. 1046- 1155. In: FAO species identification guide for fishery purpose. The living marine resources of the Western Central Pacific. Volume 2. Cephalo-



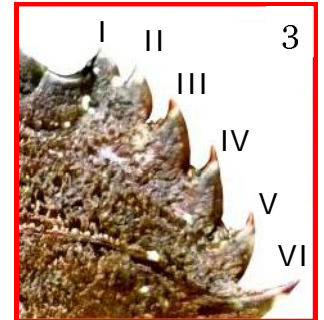
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Musandam: Dibba; Batinah: Sohar, Barca; Muscat: As Seeb.

Gear: gillnet, Oman trap.

Crucifix crab

Fam. Portunidae

Charybdis hellerii (A. Milne Edwards, 1867)



Distinguishing features:

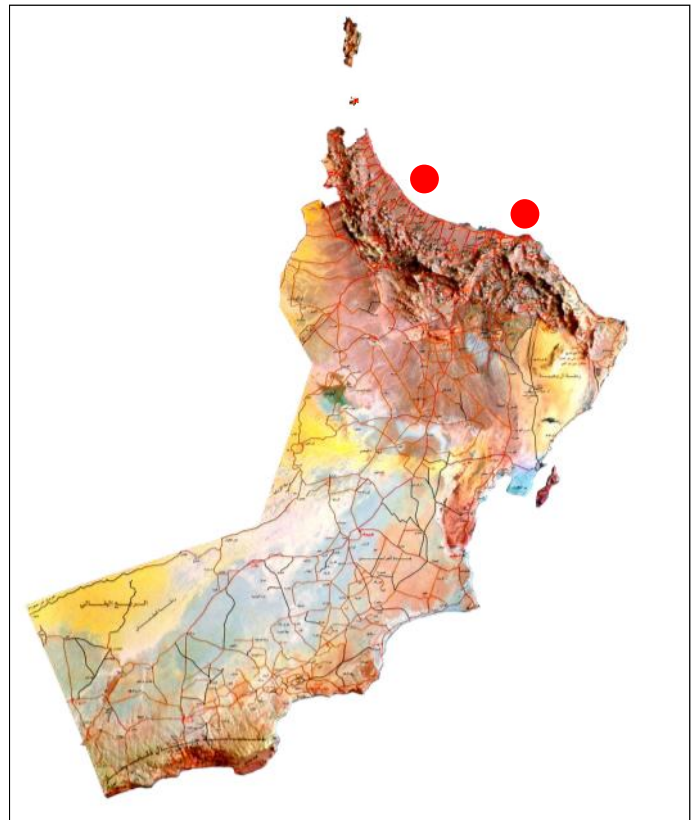
1. Carapace is pubescent, with transverse granular lines on frontal, protogastric and mesogastric regions;
2. Front has 6 sub equal triangular distally rounded teeth;
3. Antero-lateral borders have 6 teeth.

Habitat: sandy- muddy substrate.

Depth range: 5 to 40 meters.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.



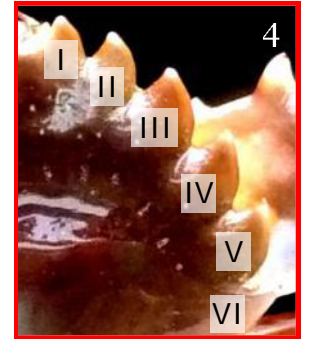
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Batinah: Shinas, Sohar; Muscat: Mina.

Gear: traps.

Indo – Pacific swimming crab

Fam. Portunidae

Charybdis lucifera Fabricius, 1798



Distinguishing characters:

1. Antennal flagellum excluded from orbital hiatus;
2. 6 frontal teeth rounded;
3. Posterior border of cephalothorax curved, forming curved postero-lateral junction;
4. 6 antero-lateral teeth,
5. 4 pale spots on mesobranchial regions.

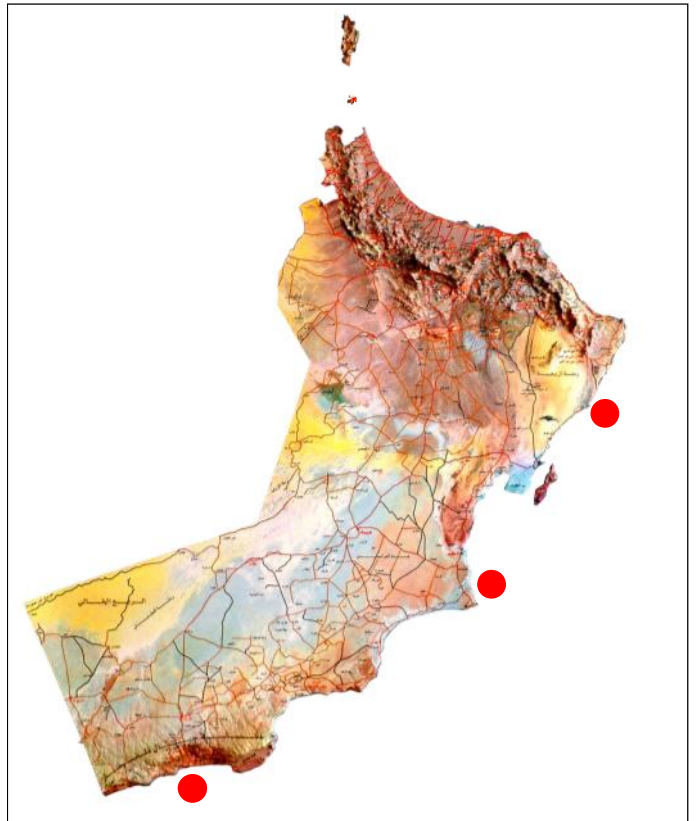
Habitat: sandy bottom.

Depth range: 3 to 40 meters.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.

Key references:



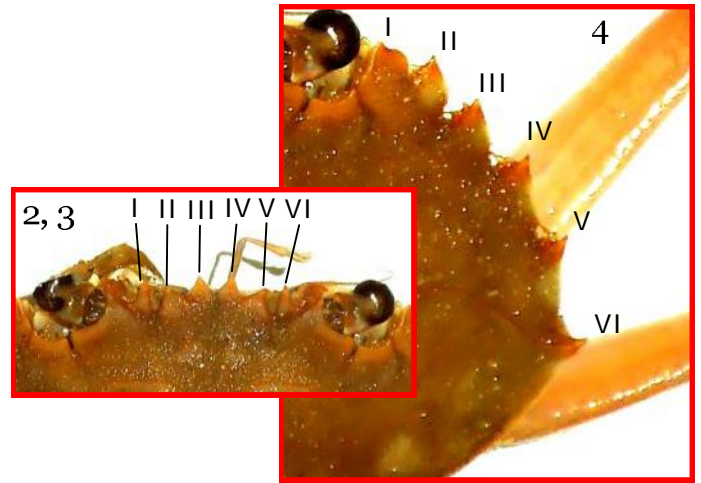
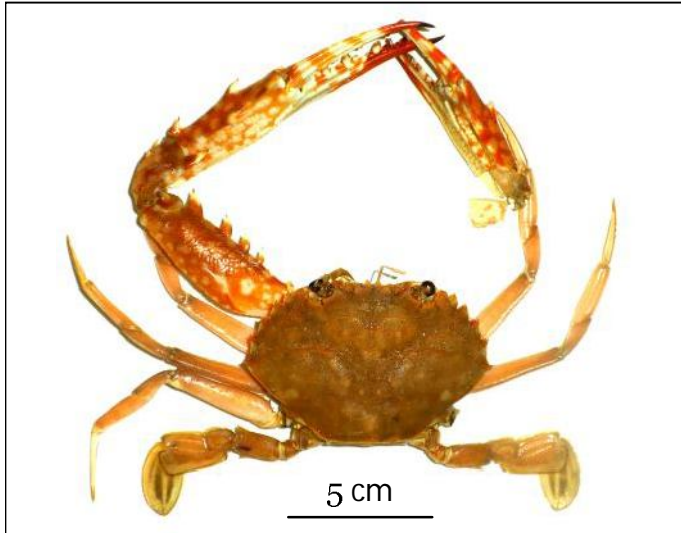
Omani records: The Arabian Sea: Sharqiyah; Khuwaima; Al Wusta: Lakbi; Dhofar: Raysut.

Gear: gillnet, traps.

Swimming crab

Fam. Portunidae

Charybdis miles De Haan, 1835



Distinguishing features:

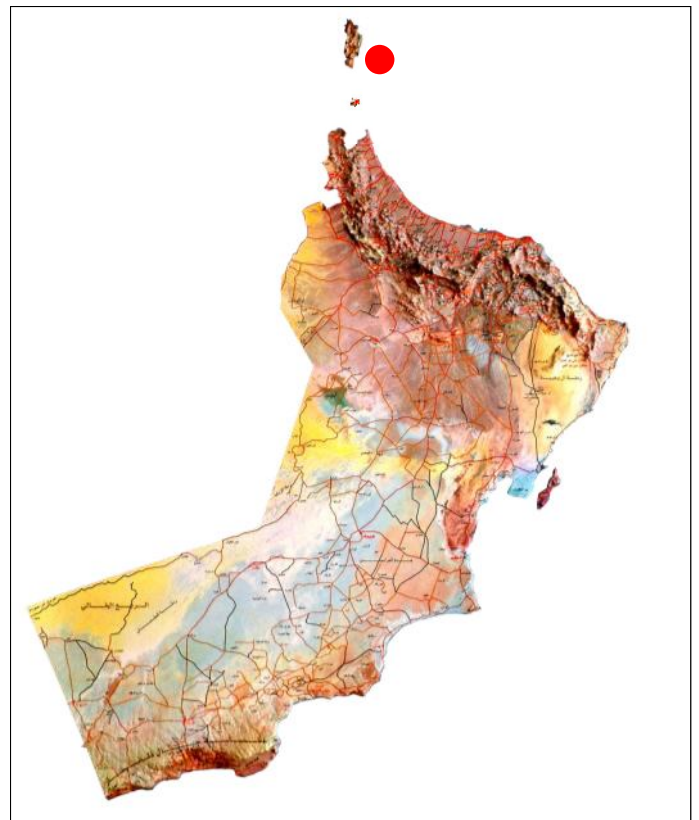
1. Carapace is convex, covered with tomenta;
2. Antennall flagellum is excluded from orbital hiatus;
3. Front is divided into 6 lobes;
4. Antero-lateral borders have 6 teeth.

Habitat: soft bottom.

Depth range: at depths 100 m.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.



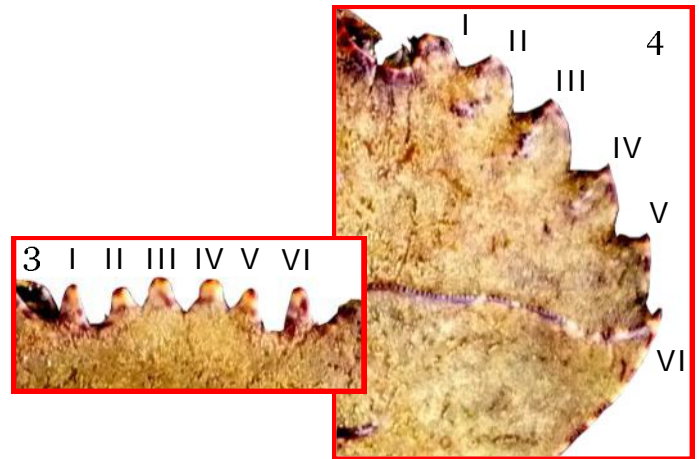
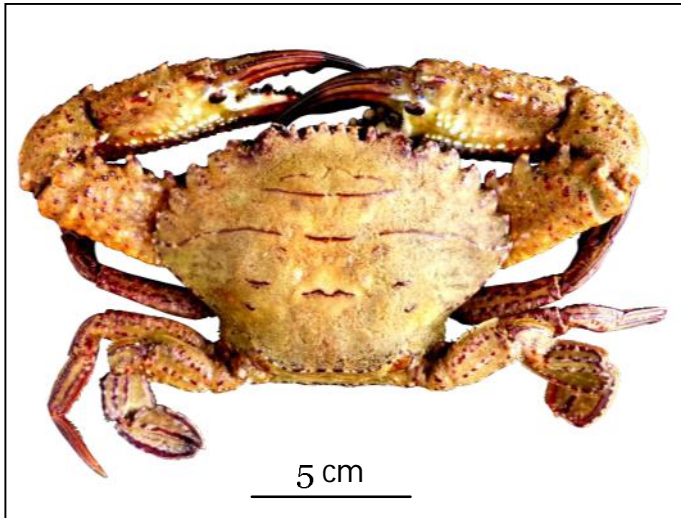
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Musandam: Dibba.

Gear: Omani trap.

Swimming crab

Fam. Portunidae

Charybdis natator (Herbst, 1794)



Distinguishing features:

1. Carapace is densely pubescent;
2. Transverse granular lines on protogastric and mesogastric regions;
3. Front has six teeth, medians and submedians truncate, laterals triangular with rounded tips;
4. Antero-lateral borders have 6 teeth.

Habitat: in rocky-sandy substrates.

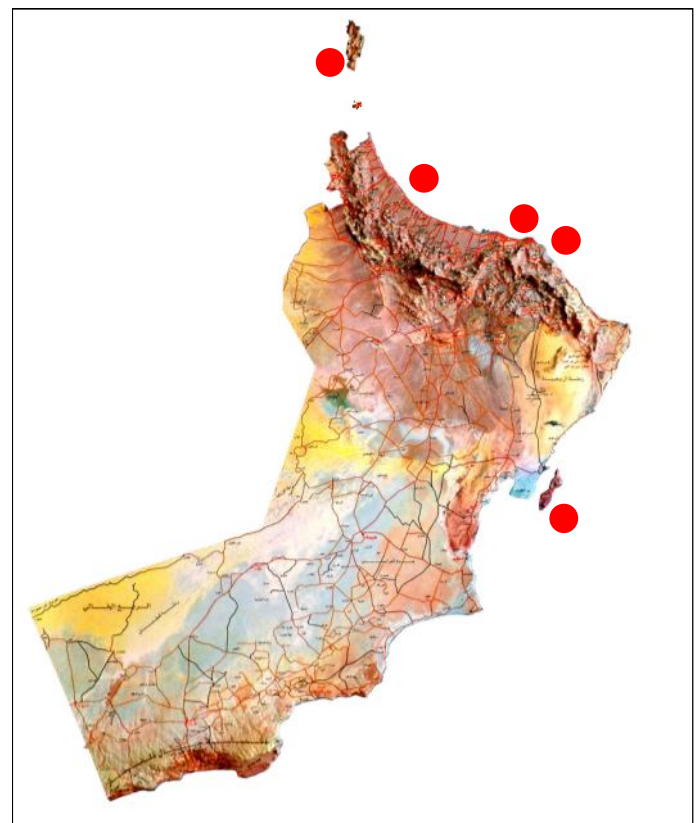
Depth range: from depths of 5 to 40 meters.

Distribution: Indian and western Pacific oceans.

Importance to humans: contribute to crab fisheries in India and Australia.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.



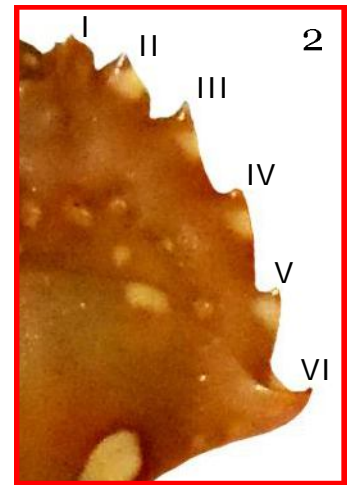
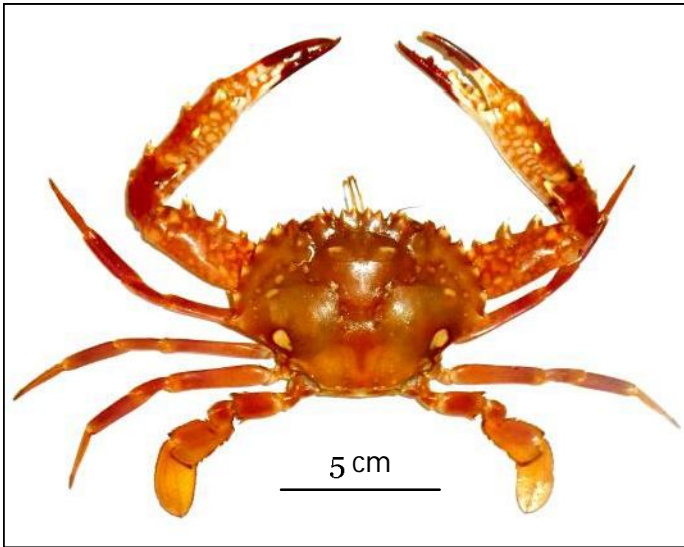
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Musandam: Khasab; Batinah: Shinas; Muscat: Ghubra, Bandar Khearan; The Arabian Sea: Al Wusta: the Island of Masira.

Gear: traps.

Ridged (rock) swimming crab

Fam. Portunidae

Charybdis sagamiensis Parisi, 1916



Distinguishing characters:

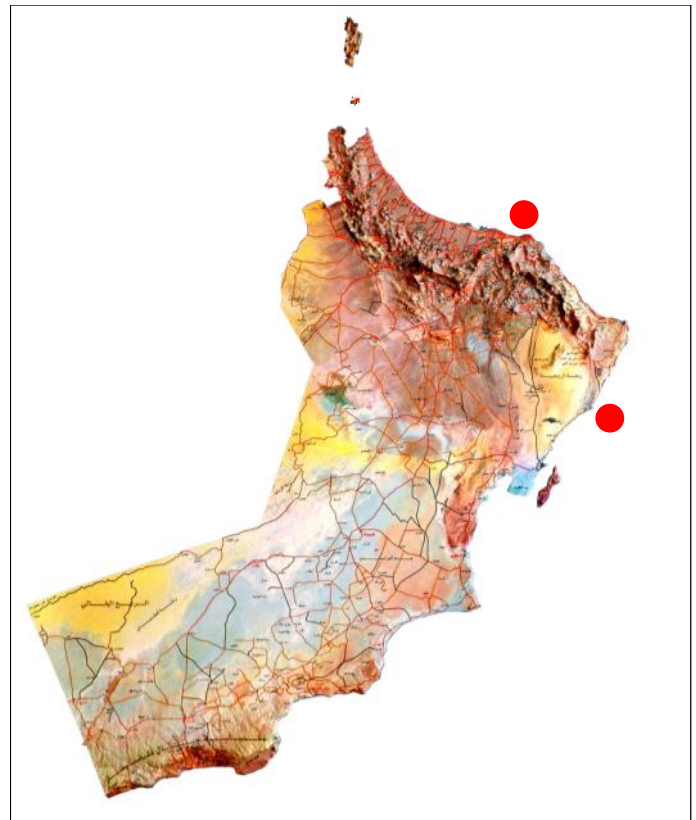
1. Antennall flagellum is excluded from orbital hiatus;
2. Posterior border of cephalothorax is curved, forming curved postero-lateral junction;
3. 6 antero-lateral teeth;

Habitat:

Depth range:

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.



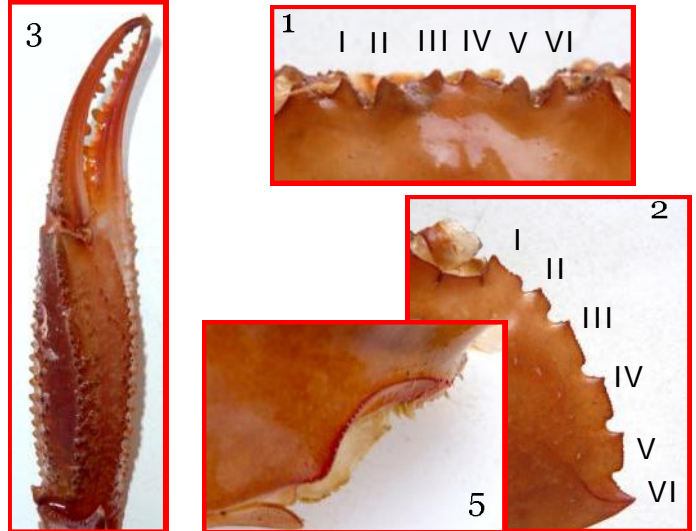
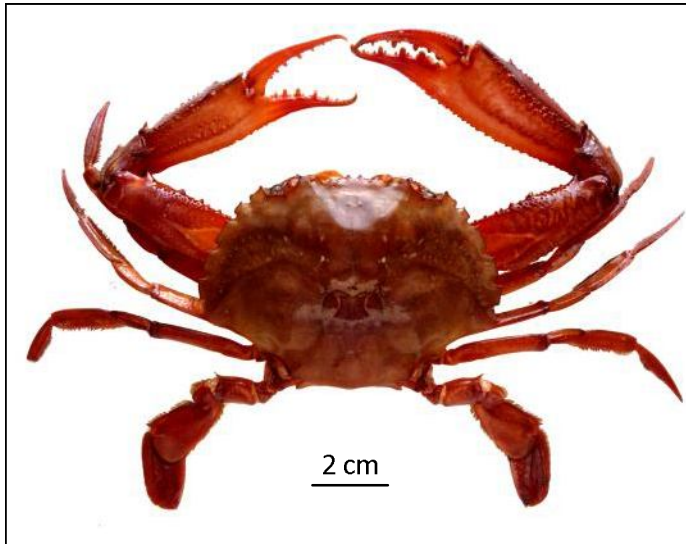
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Muscat; the Arabian Sea: Ashkharah.

Gear: gillnet.

Swimming crab

Fam. Portunidae

Charybdis smithii MacLeay, 1838



Distinguishing characters:

1. 6 frontal acute teeth;
2. 6 antero-lateral teeth;
3. Palm of chelipeds has granular ridges;
4. Carpus of fifth leg has a spine;
5. Posterior border of cephalothorax is curved, forming curved postero-lateral junction;

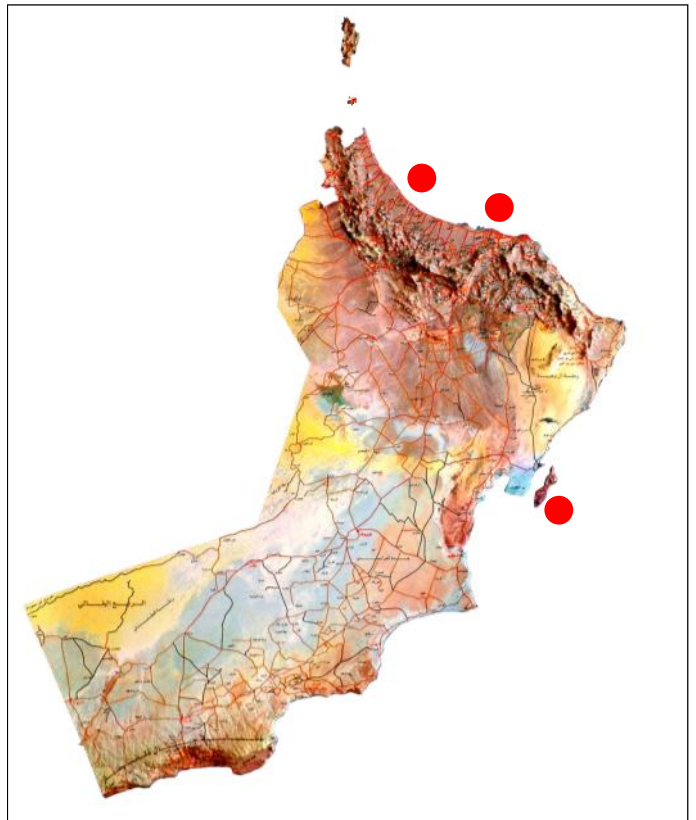
Habitat: soft bottom;

Depth range: deepwater;

Distribution: Indo-Pacific;

Importance to humans: food resource for large pelagic fish due to numerical abundance and seasonal surface swarming;

Key references:



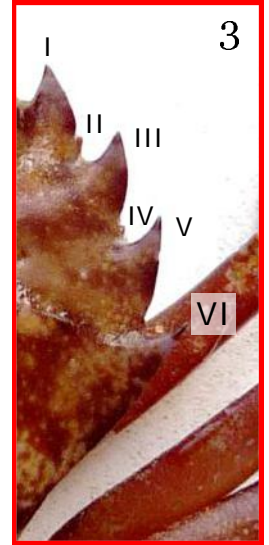
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Batinah: Sohar; Muscat: Seeb, Sidab. The Arabian Sea: Al-Wusta: the Island of Masira.

Gear: gillnet.

Deep water swimming crab

Fam. Portunidae

Gonioinfradens paucidentatus



Distinguishing characters:

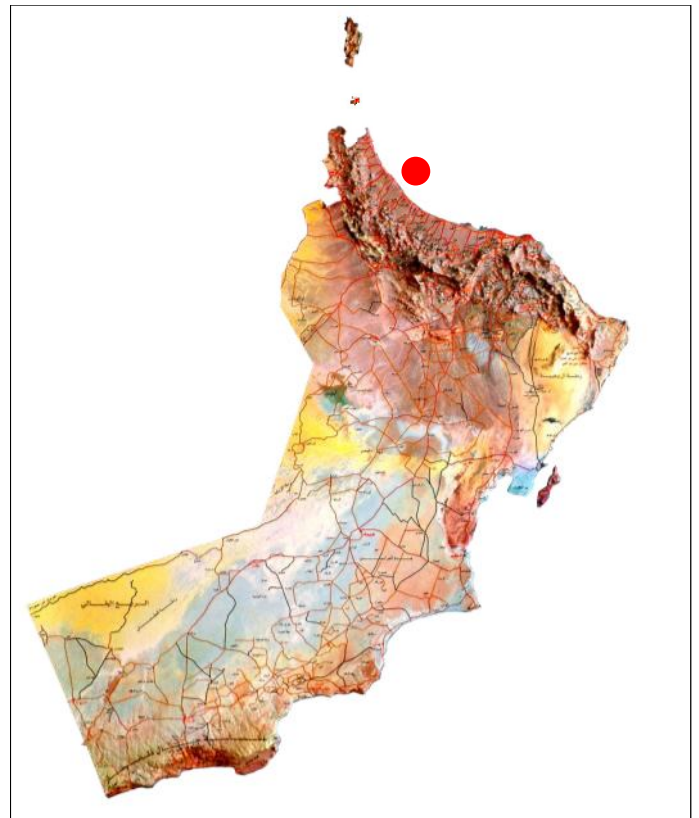
1. Carapace is bare and smooth;
2. Front has 6 teeth;
3. Antero-lateral borders have 6 teeth of which the second and fourth are very small;
4. Antennal flagellum is excluded from orbital hiatus;
5. Postero-lateral junction is rounded;

Habitat: soft bottom.

Depth range:

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.



Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Batinah:

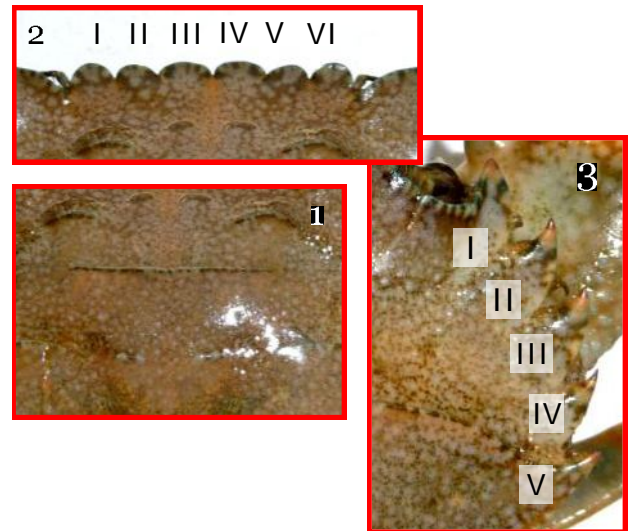
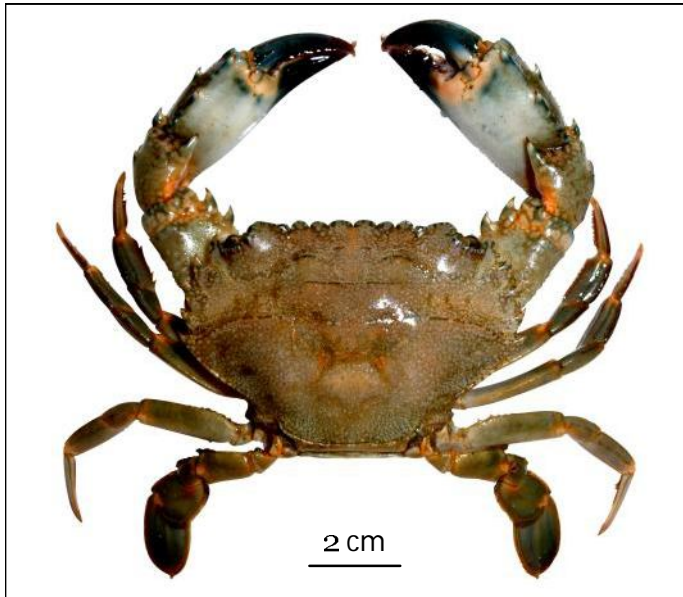
Sohar

Gear: trap.

Swimming crab

Fam. Portunidae

Thalamita crenata (Rüppell, 1830)



Distinguishing characters:

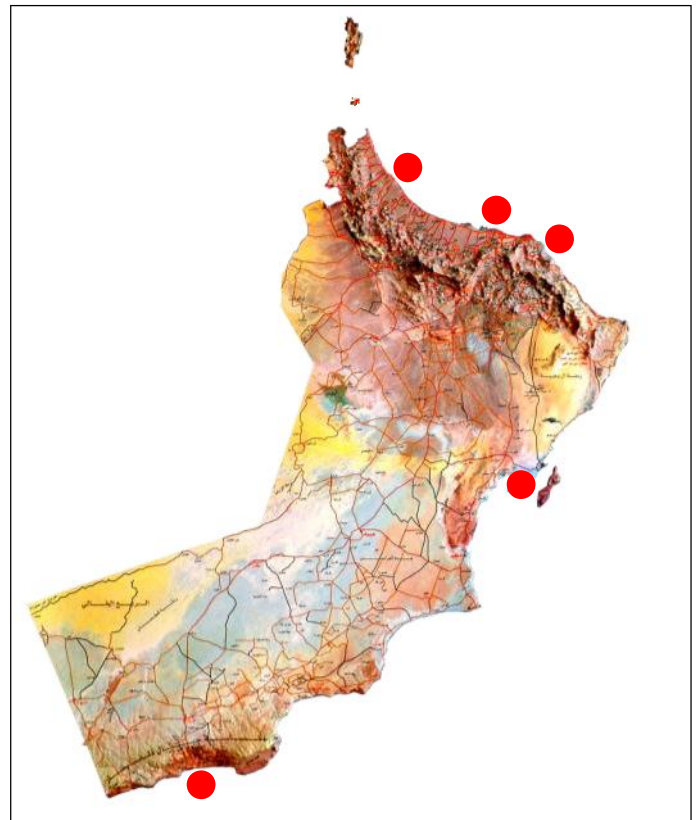
1. Carapace has 3 pairs of gastric ridges;
2. Front typically has 6 lobes;
3. 5 antero-lateral teeth are decreasing slightly in size from front to rear.

Habitat: mangroves, sandy, muddy, rocky bottom

Depth range: intertidal

Distribution: Indo-Pacific

Importance to humans: none



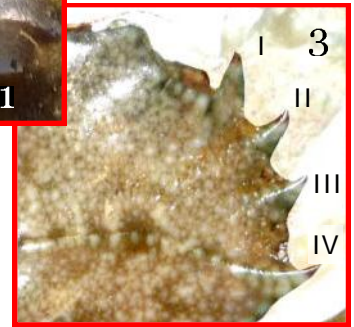
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Batimah; Sohar; Muscat: Mutrah, Yiti; the Arabian sea: Al Wusta; the Island of Masira; Dhofar: Raysut.

Gear: gillnet, traps.

Mangrove swimming crab

Fam. Portunidae

Thalamita dakini Montgomeri, 1931



Distinguishing characters:

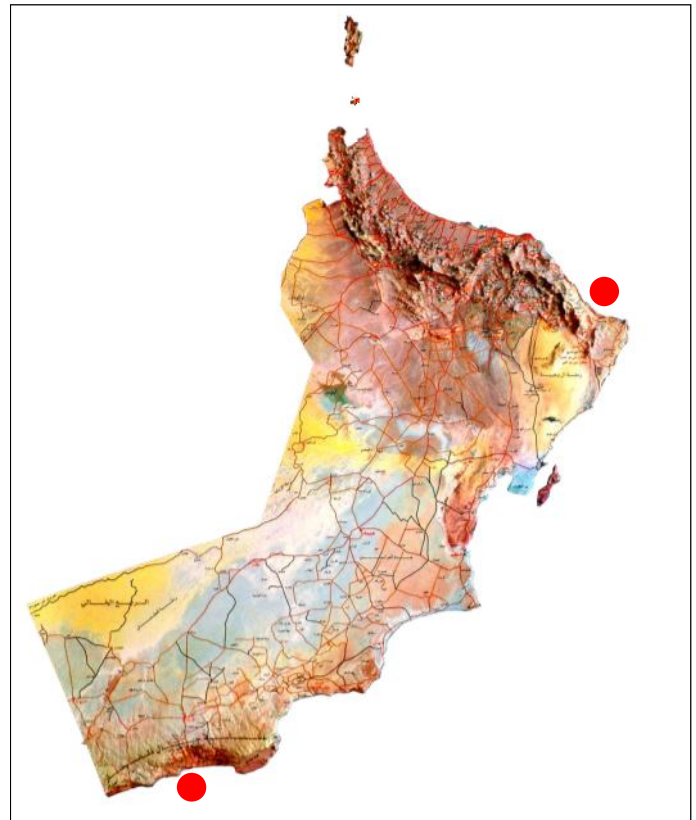
1. Carapace has 3 pairs of gastric ridges;
2. Front has 2 broad lobes, separated by a notch;
3. 4 or 5 antero-lateral teeth.

Habitat: rocky shore.

Depth range: intertidal.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.



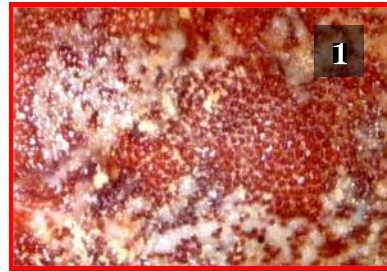
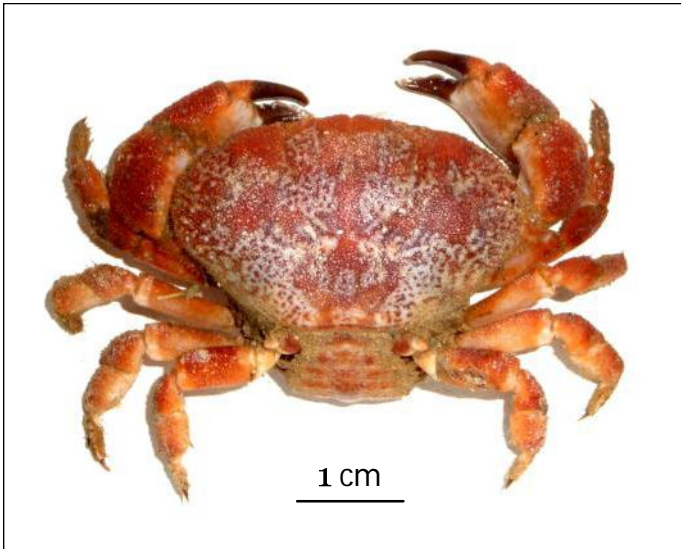
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Sharqiyah: Sur; the Arabian Sea: Dhofar: Khawr Rowri.

Gear: hands.

Swimming crab

Fam. Xanthidae

Atergatis integerrimus (Lamarck, 1818)



Distinguishing features:

1. The carapace is about 1.6 times broader than long.
2. The surface of the carapace is marked by large, compact punctuations;
3. The chelipeds have the crest on the superior margin of the palm clearly defined and generally protruding.

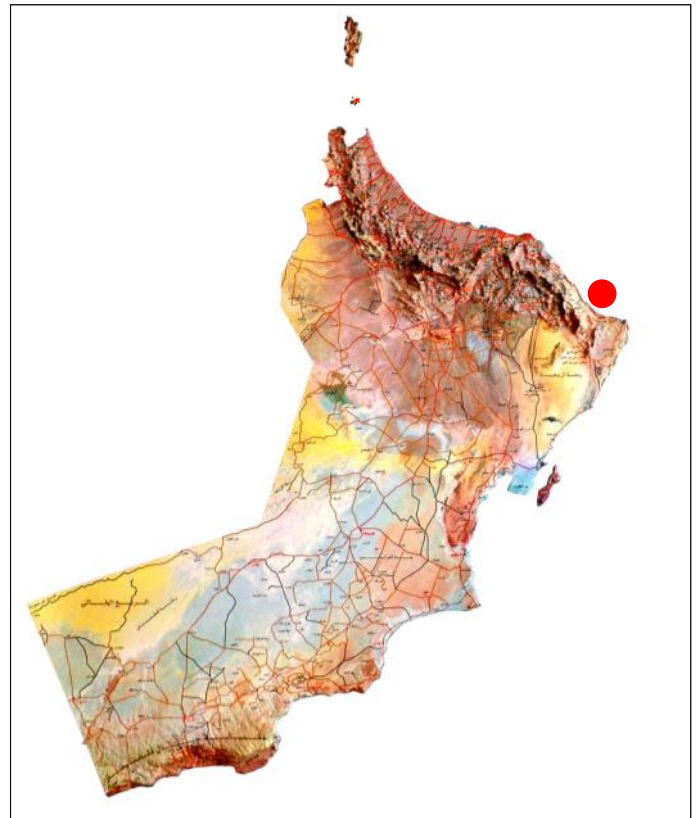
Habitat: rocky shore.

Depth range: intertidal.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific .

Importance to humans: none.

Key references:



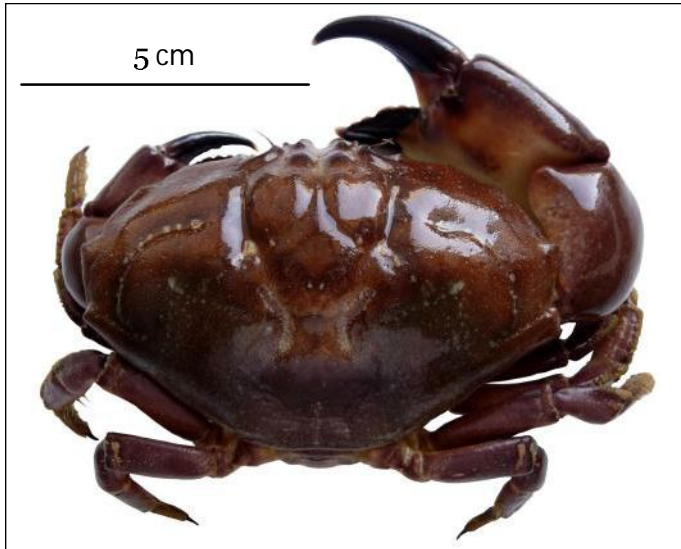
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Sharqiyah, Sur.

Gear: hands.

Stone crab

Fam. Xanthidae

Etisus laevimanus Randall, 1840



Distinguishing features:

1. Carapace is distinctly broader than long, surfaces very smooth;
2. Anterolateral margin has 5 lobiform teeth (first 2 teeth never spine-tipped).

Habitat: Inhabits reefs

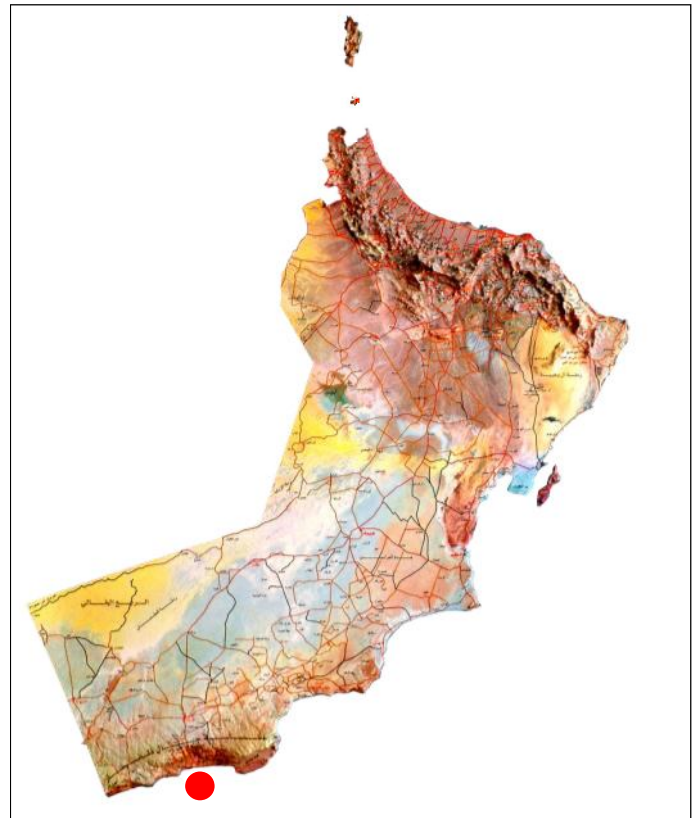
Depth range: from the intertidal zone to 20 m.

Distribution: Indo-West Pacific.

Importance to humans: of low market value.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.
2. P.K.L. Ng. Crabs. pp. 1046- 1155. In: FAO species identification guide for fishery purpose. The living marine resources of the Western Central Pacific. Volume 2. Cephalopods, crustaceans, holothurians and sharks.



Omani records: The Arabian Sea: Dhofar:

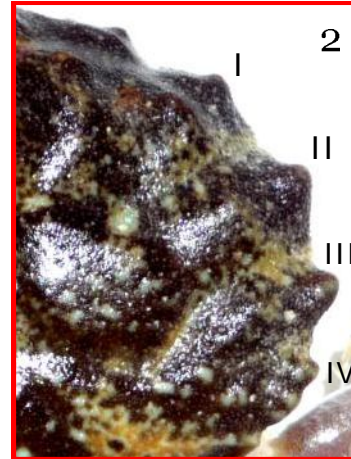
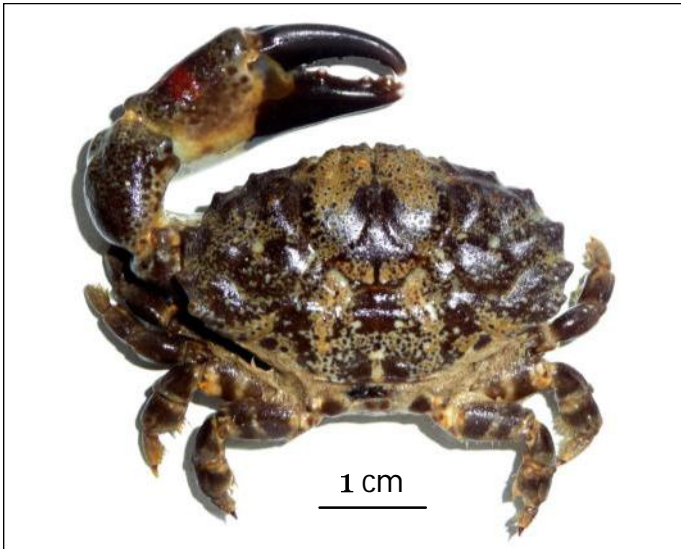
Taquah

Gear: hands.

Smooth spooner

Fam. Xanthidae

Gaillardius rueppelli (Kraus, 1843)



Distinguishing features:

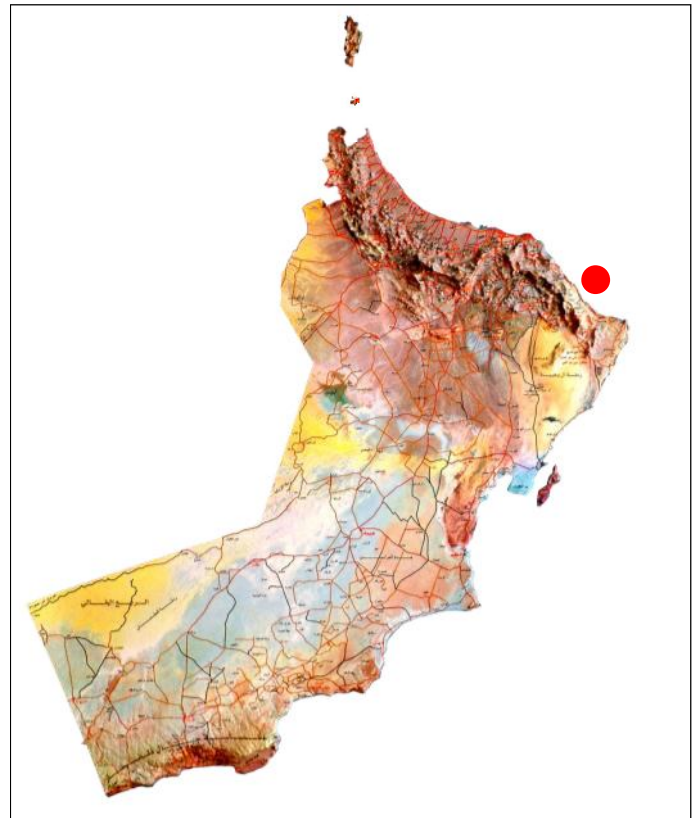
1. All lobules of carapace are clearly separated by deep smooth grooves;
2. Antero-lateral borders are composed of four well convex lobules exclusive of the external orbital angle;
3. Postero-lateral border are relatively shorter.

Habitat: rocky shore.

Depth range: intertidal.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.



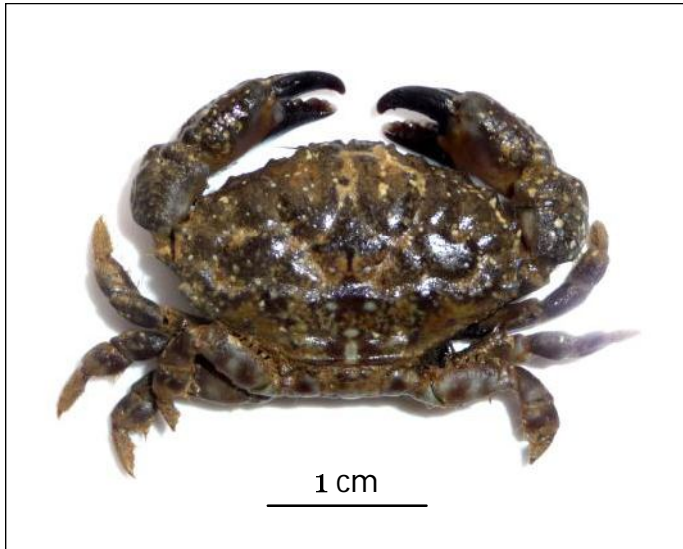
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Sharqiyah

Gear: hands.

Stone crab

Fam. Xanthidae

Leptodius exaratus (H. Milne Edwards, 1834)



Distinguishing features:

1. The carapace and chelipeds have their surfaces granular or smooth, sometimes finely punctate.
2. The antero-lateral margins of the carapace have 4 to 5 teeth behind the exorbital angle.

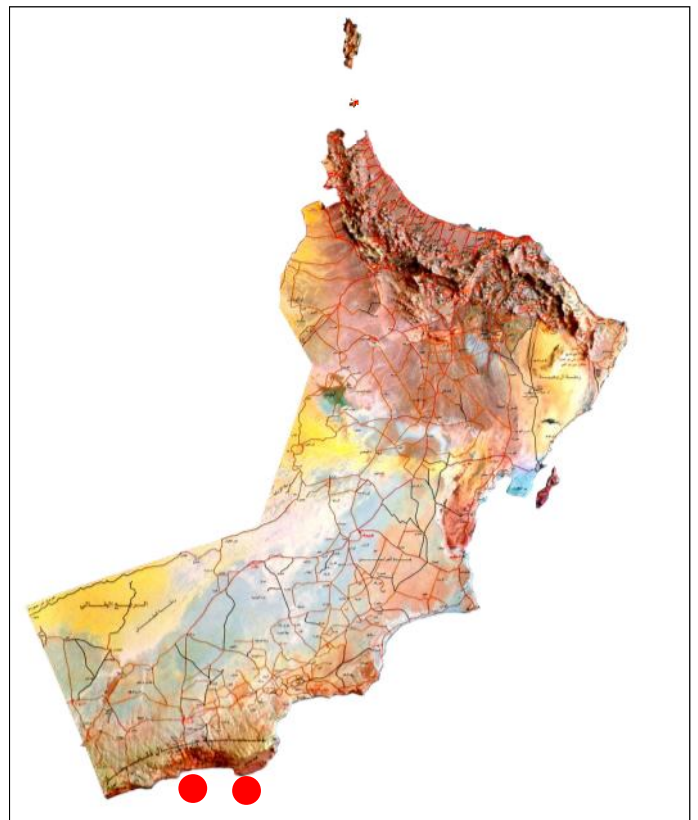
Habitat: rocky shore.

Depth range: intertidal.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.

Key references:



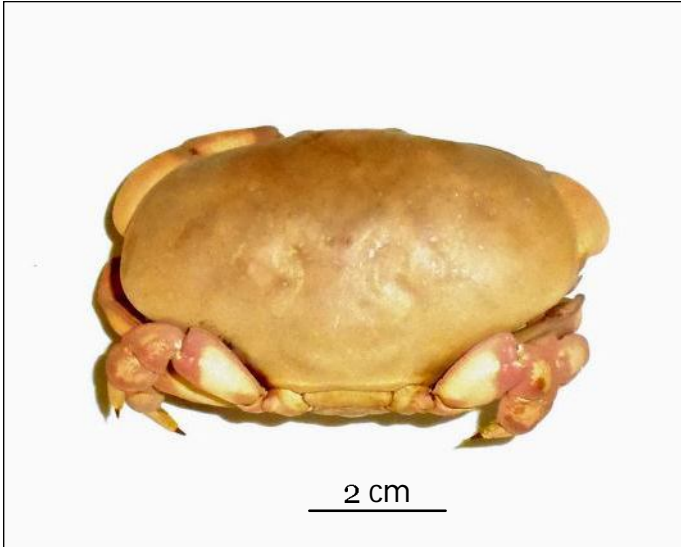
Omani records: The Arabian Sea: Dhofar: Raysout, Mirbat.

Gear: hands.

Stone crab

Fam. Xanthidae

Liomera cinctimana (White, 1847)



Distinguishing features:

1. The carapace is strongly convex longitudinally and feebly transversely
2. The carapace, chelipeds and ambulatory legs have the surface very finely granular or punctate;
3. Carapace very broad, its breadth approximately 1.8 times its length.

Habitat: Inhabits the rocky beach, also commonly seen on the coral reef.

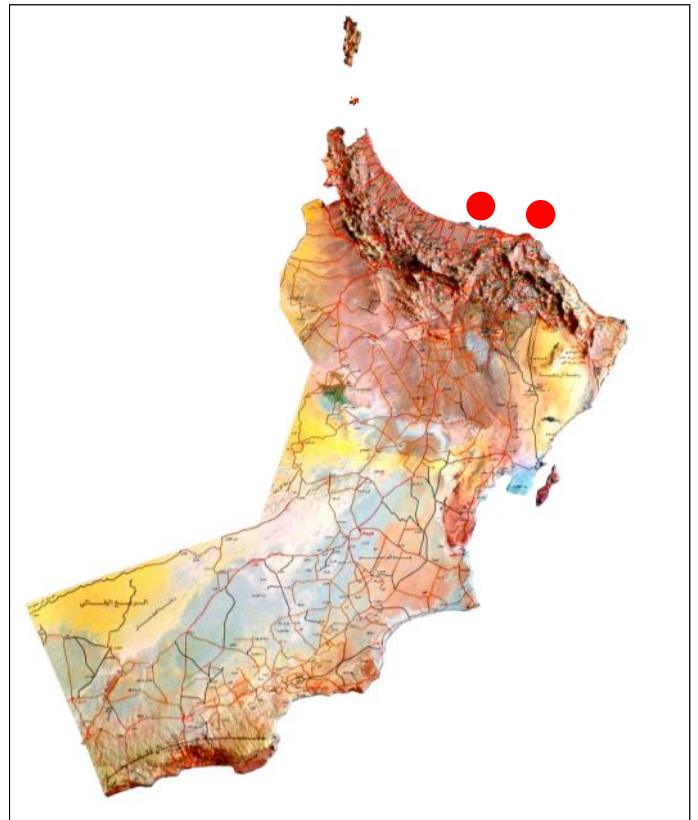
Depth range: from littoral to 35 meters deep.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.

Key references:

1. T. Sakai, 1976. Crabs of Japan and the Adjacent Seas, 773 p.



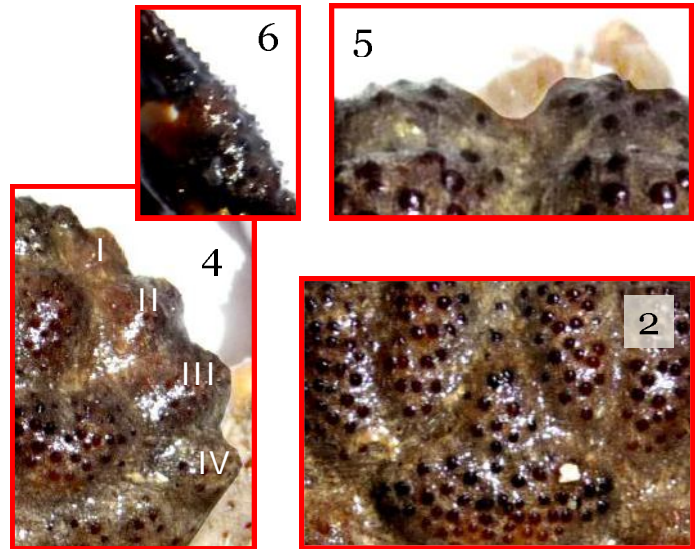
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Muscat: Bander Rowda, As Seeb.

Gear: hands.

Reef crab

Fam. Xanthidae

Psaumis cavipes (Dana, 1852)



Distinguishing features:

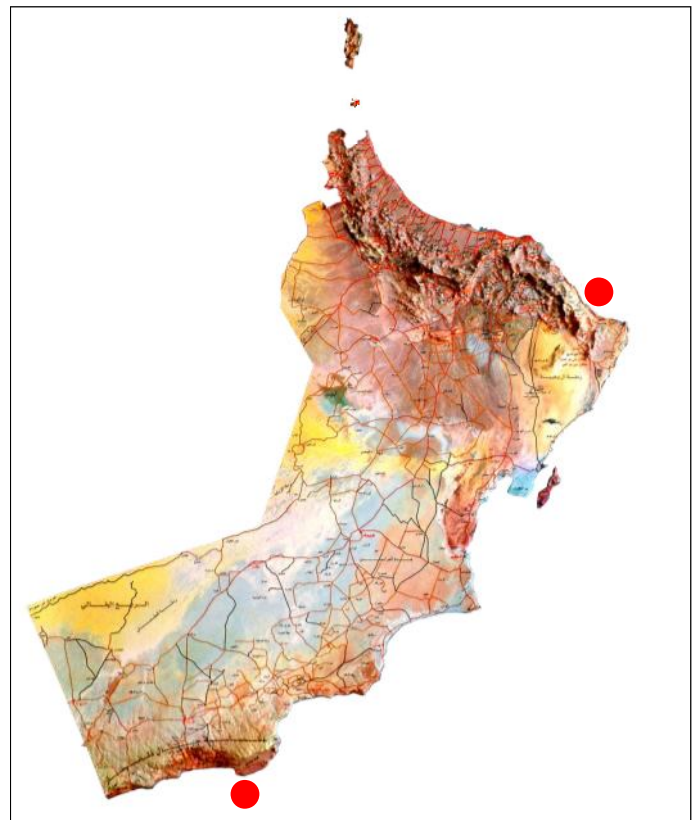
1. Proportion of carapace length and width is 1.6.
2. Dorsal surface is covered with a pavement of fine granules interspersed with pits;
3. Lobules of carapace are all perfectly demarcated;
4. Four granulated lobes on the antero-lateral borders;
5. Median notch of the front is well marked.
6. Upper and outer surfaces of wrist and palm with numerous pits and craters;

Habitat: rocky shore.

Depth range: intertidal.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific .

Importance to humans: none.



Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Sharqiyah: Sur; The Arabian Sea: Mirbat.

Gear: hands.

Stone crab

Family Gecarcinidae

Cardisoma carnifex Herbst, 1794



Distinguishing characters:

1. Carapace circular, brown in life; face (pterygostomial and sub-branchial regions) with small setose area which does not reach branchiostegal region;
2. Setae on propodus and carpus of legs;
3. Males with 1 cheliped several times size of other.

Habitat: completely terrestrial crabs, living near the sea and excavating deep burrows.

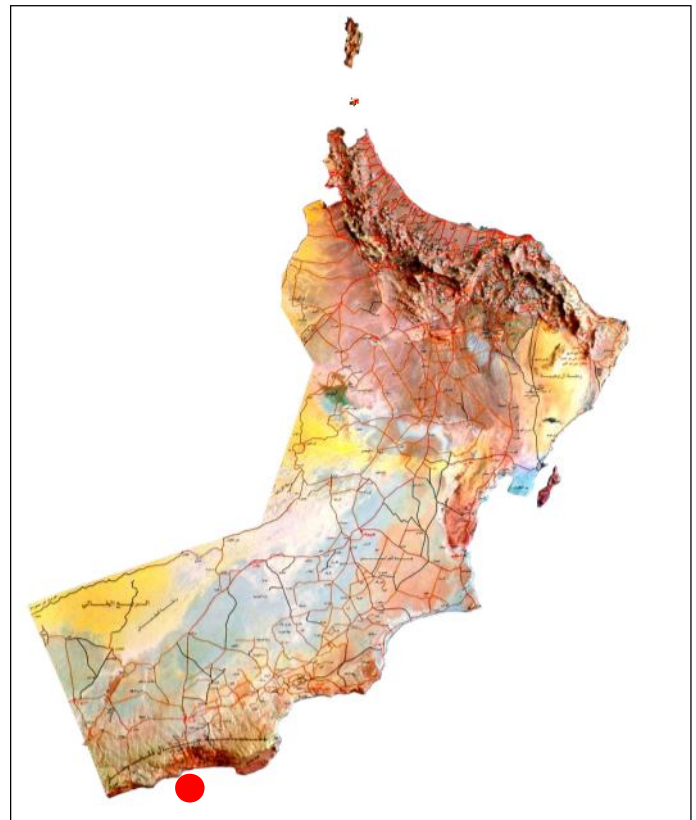
Depth range: supralitoral.

Distribution: Indo-West Pacific .

Importance to humans: has a comparatively low market value. It is usually caught by hand at night, or with special traps placed at the mouth of its burrow. The crabs are sold live.

Key references:

1. P.K.L. Ng. Crabs. pp. 1046- 1155. In: FAO species identification guide for fishery purpose. The living marine resources of the Western Central Pacific. Volume 2. Cephalopods, crustaceans, holothurians and sharks.



Omani records: The Arabian Sea: Dhofar: khawr Mughsail.

Gear: hands, trap.

Brown land crab

Fam. Grapsidae

Geograpsus stormi De Man, 1895



Distinguishing characters:

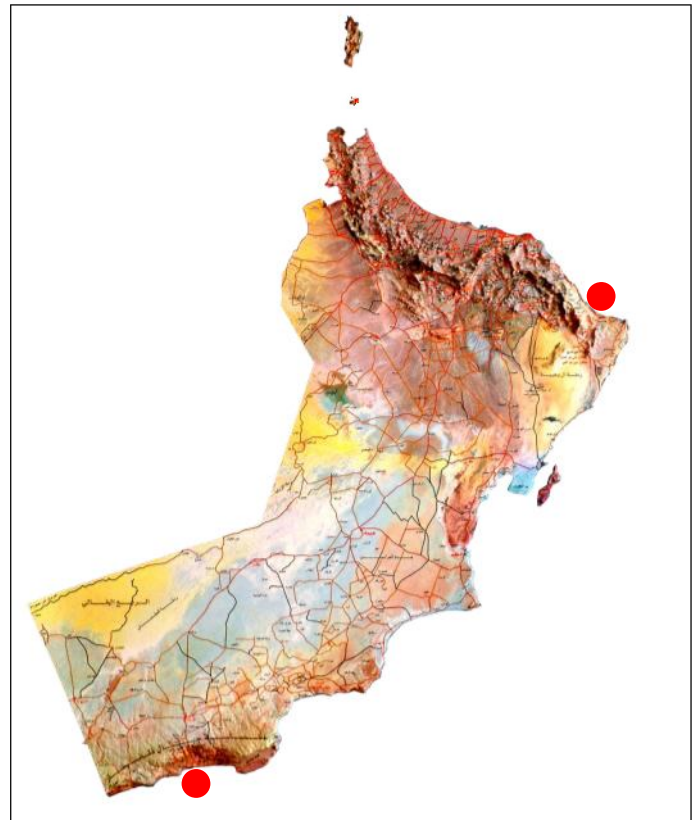
1. Carapace has no transverse ridges or lines on cardiac and intestinal regions;
2. Transverse ridges on branchial regions rather of carapace straight;
3. Antero-lateral margin is perfectly straight.

Habitat: rocky shore.

Depth range: intertidal.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.



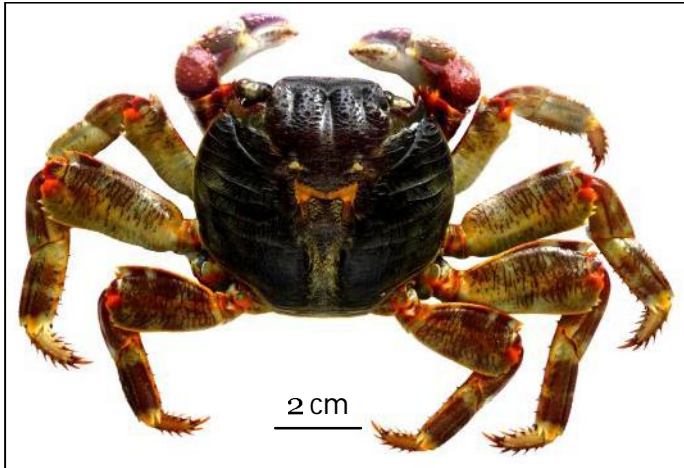
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Sharqiyah: Sur. The Arabian sea: Dhofar: Taquah.

Gear: hands.

Rock crab

Fam. Grapsidae

Grapsus albolineatus Latreille in Milbert, 1812



Distinguishing characters:

1. Carapace is sub circular, slightly broader than long, about 1.1 times as broad as long;
2. Chelipeds are sub equal, in comparison to walking legs relatively small;
3. Walking legs are relatively strong, flattened.

Habitat: most common species on exposed rocky shores, where it is present in large populations. It is normally seen foraging on algae, disappearing into crevices if disturbed.

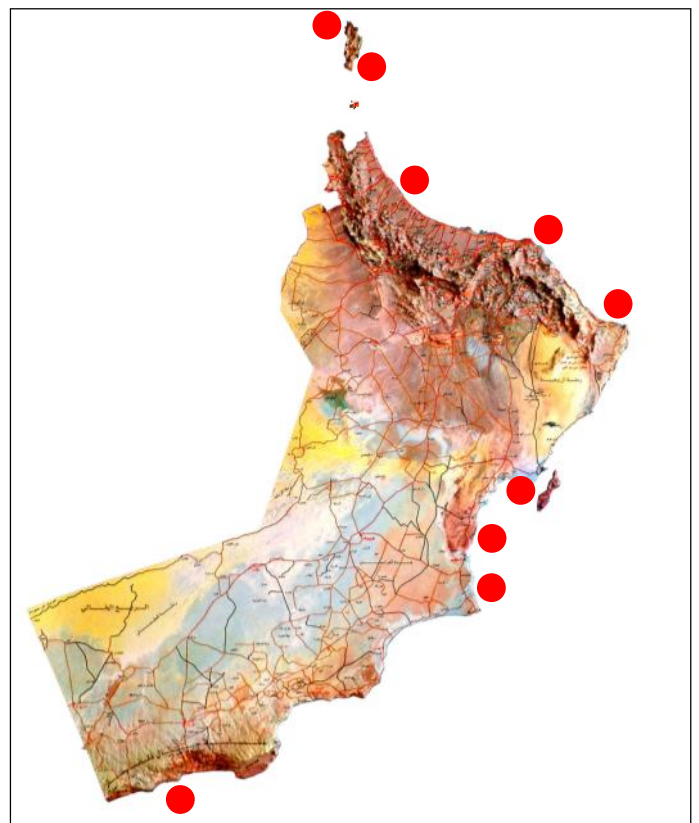
Depth range: high rocky intertidal.

Distribution: Indo-West Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.

Key references:

1. R. Naderloo, 2011. Grapsoid crabs (Decapoda: Brachyura: Thoracotremata) of



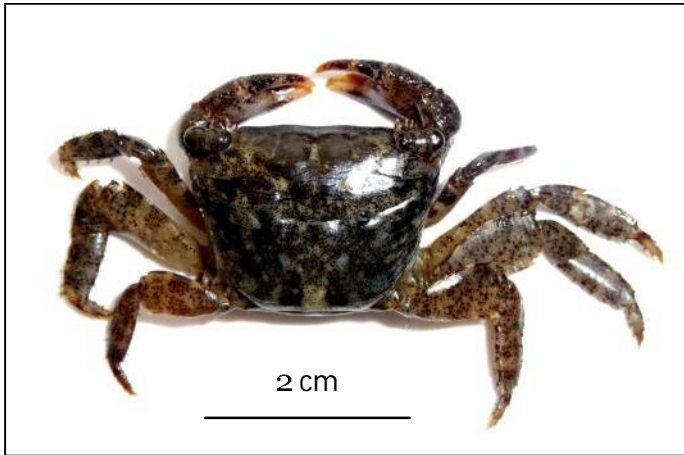
Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Musandam: Dibba, Khasab; Batinah: Sohar, Shinas; Muscat. The Arabian Sea: Al Wusta, Dhofar.

Gear: hands.

Rock crab

Fam. Grapsidae

Metopograpsus messor (Forskål, 1775)



Distinguishing characters:

1. Carapace is about 1.3 times as broad as long, maximum breadth slightly behind exorbital angles;
2. Chelipeds are sub equal;
3. Walking legs are flattened, second, third legs longer than first, fourth.

Habitat: muddy substrates, rocky shores and mangroves.

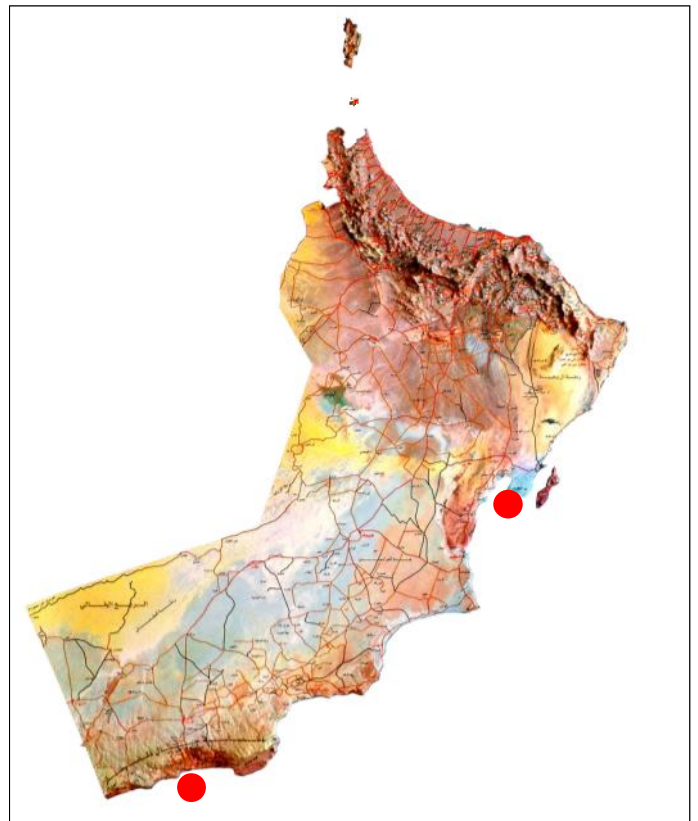
Depth range: from high to mid-intertidal zone.

Distribution: Indian Ocean.

Importance to humans: None.

Key references:

1. R. Naderloo, 2011. Grapsoid crabs



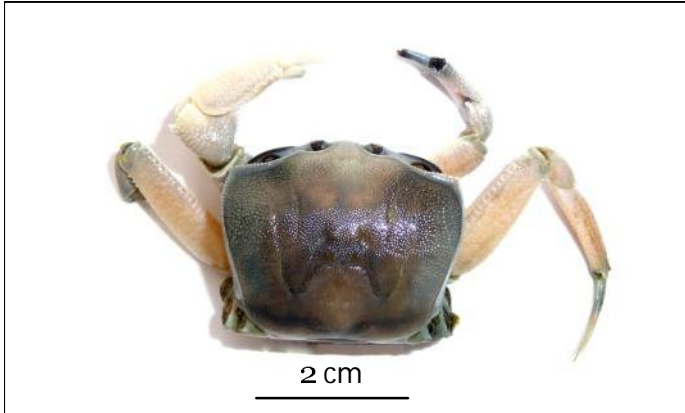
Omani records: The Arabian Sea: Al- Wusta: Filim; Dhofar: Raysut.

Gear: hands.

Messor's Shore Crab

Family Ocypodidae

Ocypode jousseaumei (Nobili, 1905)



Distinguishing characters:

1. Stridulating ridge is greater than half the height of the palm;
2. Eyestalks are not prolonged beyond the end of cornea.

Habitat: inner reaches of khawrs, oceanic beaches.

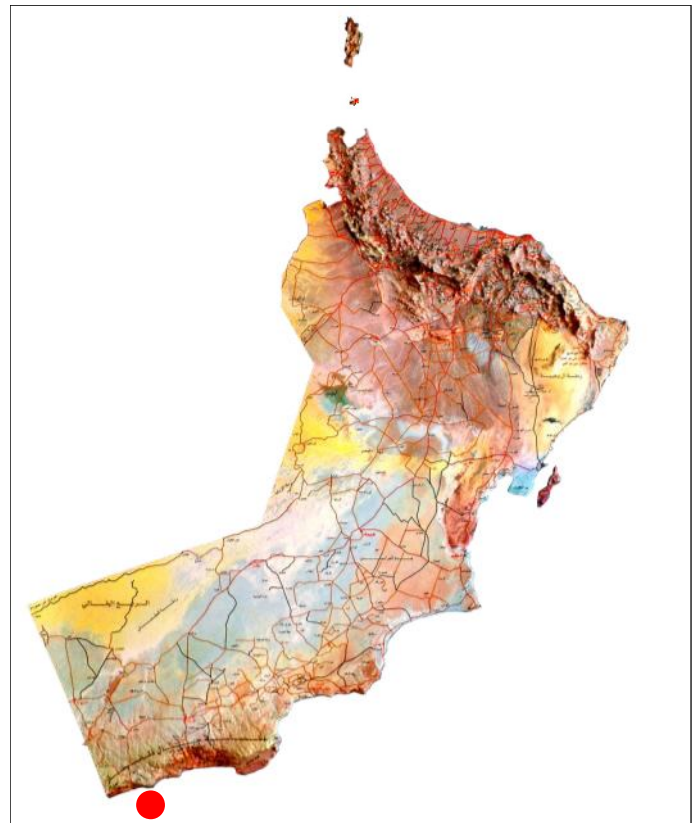
Depth range: at the edge of high tide line.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.

Key references:

1. Clayton D.A., 1996. Ghost crabs of Oman (Crustacea: Brachyura: Ocypodidae). Sultan Quaboos University Journal. Sci. 1: 27-35.



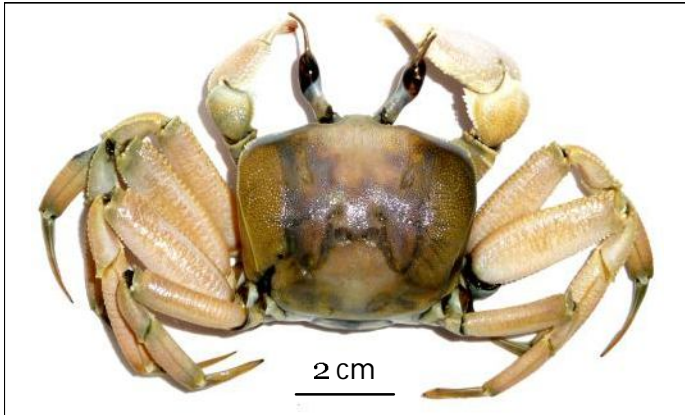
Omani records: The Arabian Sea: Dhofar: Dhalkout.

Gear: hands.

Ghost crab

Family Ocypodidae

Ocypode rotundata (Miers, 1882)



Distinguishing characters:

1. Stridulating ridge less than half the height of the palm.

Habitat: species of open beaches.

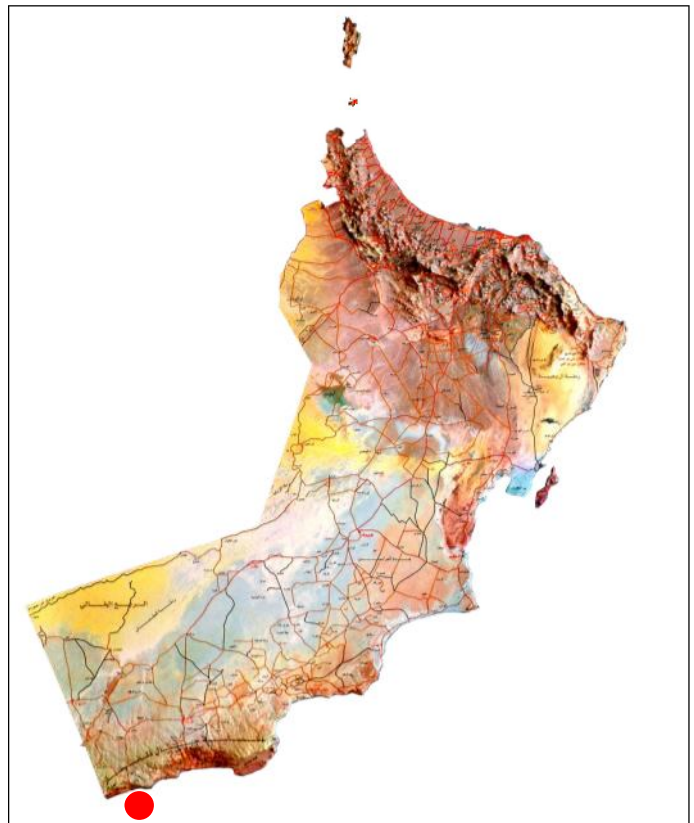
Depth range: lower part of supralittoral zone.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: none.

Key references:

1. Clayton D.A., 1996. Ghost crabs of Oman (Crustacea: Brachyura: Ocypodidae). Sultan Quaboos University Journal. Sci. 1: 27-35.



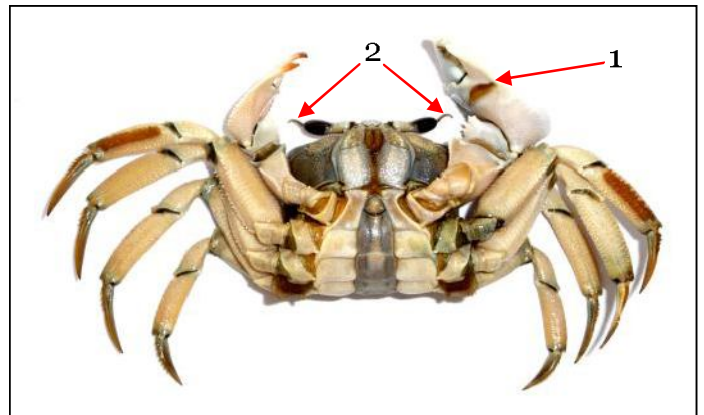
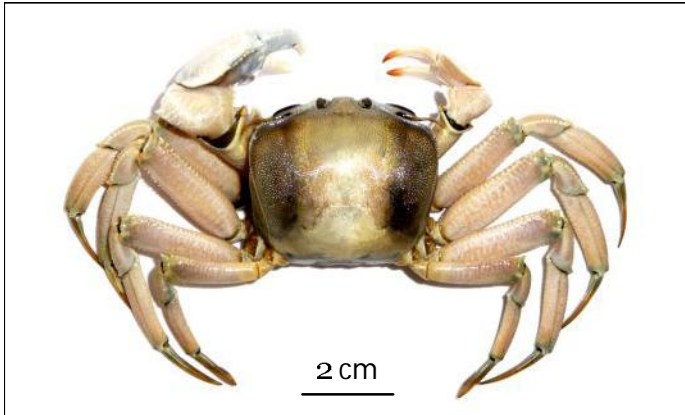
Omani records: The Arabian Sea: Dhofar: Dhalkout.

Gear: hands.

Ghost crab

Family Ocypodidae

Ocypode saratan (Forskål, 1775)



Distinguishing characters:

1. Stridulating ridge is greater than half the height of the palm;
2. Prolonged eyestalk is curved, ridge composed of fine striae.

Habitat: sand beaches.

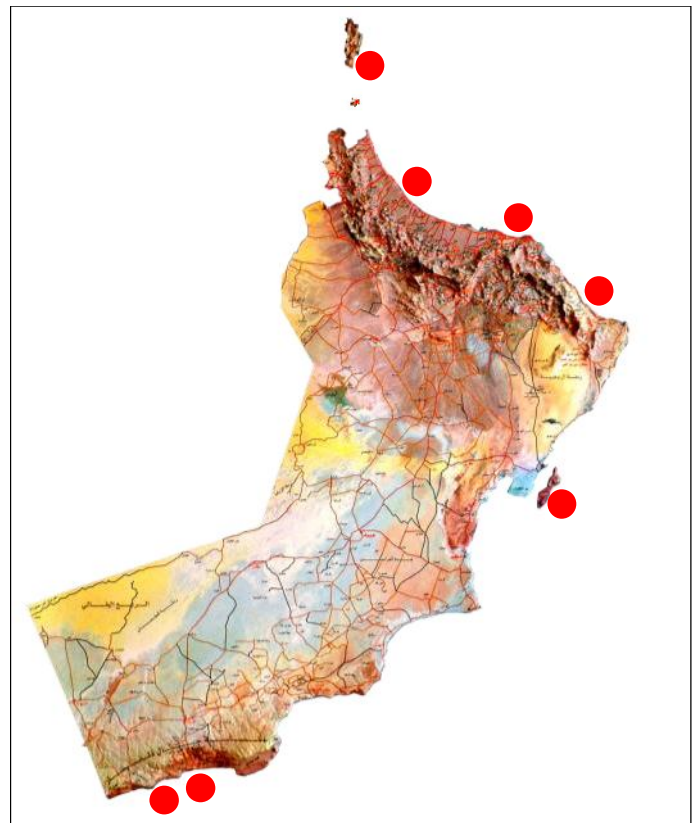
Depth range: lower part of supralittoral zone.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Importance to humans: only of local economic importance, rarely sold in markets. Usually fried for human consumption.

Key references:

1. Clayton D.A., 1996. Ghost crabs of Oman (Crustacea: Brachyura: Ocypodidae). Sultan Quaboos University Journal. Sci. 1: 27-35.



Omani records: The Sea of Oman: Musandam: Dibba; Batinah: Sohar; Muscat; Sharqiyah: Sur. The Arabian Sea: Al- Wusta: the Island of Masira; Dhofar: Taquah, Mughsail

Gear: hands.

Ghost crab