

FIRST RECORD OF *METAPENAEOPSIS TOLOENSIS* HALL, 1962 (CRUSTACEA: DECAPODA) FROM SOUTHWEST COAST OF INDIA



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INTRODUCTION

There are over 300 species of shrimps and prawns of commercial importance worldwide and of these about 100 species contributes considerable share in the annual world landings. From the commercially important genus *Metapenaeopsis* of family Penaeidae, a total of 14 species have been reported from Indian waters. Among them *Metapenaeopsis toloensis*, *M. palmensis*, *M. gallensis*, *M. commensalism* and *M. ceylonica* were previously reported only from east coast of India. The species *M. toloensis*, commonly known as tolo velvet shrimp, was reported only from the waters off Chennai and Kakinada in the east coast. This paper reports the occurrence of *M. toloensis* in the waters off Sakthikulangara in Kollam district, Kerala along the southwest coast of India. Three female specimens were observed in the landings of a shrimp trawler during the post-monsoon season along with *M. stridulans*, *Trachysalambria* spp. and *Megokris* spp. Stray catches of the species have been reported from trawl landings in Kakinada and Chennai and this species do not contribute significantly to the shrimp landings.

The first distributional record of *Metapenaeopsis toloensis* Hall, 1962 from India was reported by Ramaseshaiah and B.V.S.R. Murthy in 1988. This note gives the new distributional record of the species *M. toloensis* from south west coast of India.

***Metapenaeopsis toloensis* Hall, 1962 (Fig. 1,2)**

M. toloensis comes under the Penaeidae family. The genus *Metapenaeopsis* was described by Bouvier in 1905. The distinguishing characters of the *Metapenaeopsis* are the asymmetrical petasma, thelycum with well developed median plate on the 13th sternite. Absence of ventral teeth,

longitudinal or transverse sutures, well developed antennal, pterigostomian and hepatic spines. Telson with a pair of fixed lateral sub-apical spines.

The taxonomic characters of the species *Metapenaeopsis toloensis* are, the dense pubescence and presence of dark red to dark brown mottling on the body; upcurved rostrum reaching end of second antennular segment. Stridulating organ 14-22, ventral projection of petasma short and left distoventral projection broadly swollen. Thelycum with subquadrate and with rounded corners.

Three female specimen were obtained. Average total length noted was 93 mm and average total weight noted was 3.6 mg. The three specimens were obtained along with *M. stridulans* and *Trachysalambria* spp collected from Sakthikulangara fishing harbor, Quilon, Kerala on September 2009.



Fig. 1. *Metapenaeopsis toloensis* Hall, 1962

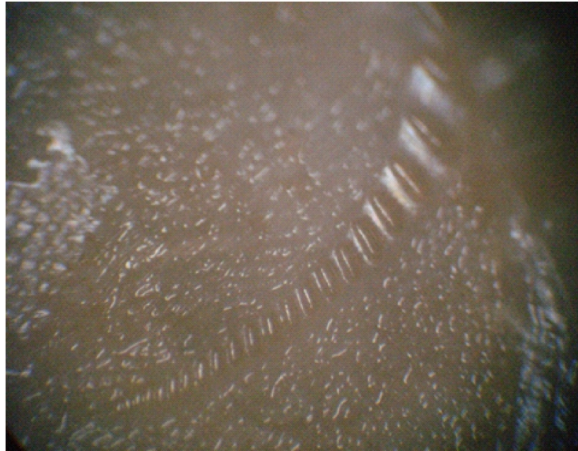


Fig. 2. Stridulating organs in the carapace

Distribution: Atlantic, American Pacific and Indo-West Pacific, East coast of India (Chennai). Radhakrishnan et al (2011) reported the distribution of *M. toloensis* from Kakinada.

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Table 1. Showing the taxonomic difference between *M. barbata* which is closely related to the species *M. toloensis*

| SL. NO. | CHARACTER | M.TOLOENSIS | M.BARBATA |
|---------|--|--|--|
| 1. | Stridulating organ | 14-22 | 16-27 |
| 2. | Rostrum | At 1/4 th depth of carapace | At more than 1/5 th depth of carapace |
| 3. | Dorsal crest of 3 rd abdominal segment | With a deep median groove | Flat or slightly concave |
| 4. | Pereopods | Shorter | Longer |
| 5. | Terminal spine of 6 th abdominal somite | Blunt | Acute |
| 6. | Petasma | Right distoventral projection short and left distoventral projection broadly swollen | Left distoventral projection long |
| 7. | Thelycum | Thelycal plates subquadrante with rounded corners | Broadly subquadrante thelycal plate |