

***Charybdis moretonensis* Rees & Stephenson, 1966, a junior synonym of *Charybdis granulata* (de Haan, 1833)
(Crustacea: Decapoda: Brachyura)**

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Abstract

Charybdis moretonensis Rees & Stephenson, 1966, is known only from the holotype and has been suspected to be conspecific with *C. granulata* (de Haan, 1833). Comparison of the holotype of *C. moretonensis* with a large series of *C. granulata* from Australia and various Indo-Pacific localities showed that the two nominal species are morphologically indistinguishable. Characters thought to distinguish the two species are not reliable, being based on a misinterpretation of the damaged holotype of *C. moretonensis*, the incomplete type description of *C. beauforti* Leene & Buitendijk, 1949 (= *C. granulata*), and a failure to account for allometric variation. Therefore, *C. moretonensis* is synonymised with *C. granulata*. We also report the largest known specimen of *C. granulata* and confirm its presence in eastern Australia.

Key words: *Charybdis moretonensis*, *Charybdis granulata*, Portunidae, synonym, taxonomy, Australia

Introduction

The swimming crab, *Charybdis moretonensis* Rees & Stephenson, 1966, was described from a single, incomplete specimen from Moreton Bay, Queensland, Australia. Rees & Stephenson (1966) noted the strong similarity between their new species and two other species, *Charybdis natator* (Herbst, 1794) and *Charybdis granulata* (de Haan, 1833) (as *Charybdis beauforti* Leene & Buitendijk, 1949). *Charybdis natator* is a widespread Indo-West Pacific species that was long regarded as a senior synonym of *C. granulata* until Sakai (1976) showed that the two species were separate and readily distinguishable.