



A new species of deep-sea crab of the genus *Chaceon* Manning & Holthuis, 1989 (Crustacea: Decapoda: Brachyura: Geryonidae) from Western Australia

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Abstract

Chaceon albus sp. nov. is described from off Western Australia. It is easily separated from the species with which it has long been confused, *C. bicolor* Manning, 1989, by proportions of the walking legs, orbital shape, gonopod form and colour. Characters to separate the new species from seven other Indian Ocean species are also discussed.

Key words: India Ocean, geryonid crabs, descriptions

Introduction

As part of a fishery survey report, Wadley & Evans (1991) first noted potential stocks of a large geryonid crab off Western Australia which they identified as *Chaceon bicolor* Manning & Holthuis, 1989. *Chaceon bicolor* was originally described from the eastern coastline of Australia and New Caledonia (Manning & Holthuis, 1989). Since then, various studies have recognised seven other species from the Indian Ocean, viz. *C. paulensis* (Chun, 1903), *C. macphersoni* (Manning & Holthuis, 1988), *C. crosnieri* Manning & Holthuis, 1989, *C. collettei* Manning, 1992, *C. somaliensis* Manning, 1993, *C. alcocki* Ghosh & Manning, 1993, and *C. goreni* Galil & Manning, 2001 (see Galil & Manning, 2001).

Independent investigations of the Western Australian specimens by the authors, led us to believe that the identity of Western Australian '*C. bicolor*' was unlikely. Jones & Morgan (1994) first provided figures of *C. bicolor* from Western Australia and Queensland which seemed to differ markedly in colour and body proportions. In October 1998, the second author worked with R. Melville-Smith (Western Australian Department of Fisheries) and Diana Jones (Western Australian Museum) while undertaking his revision of the eriphiid crab *Hypothalassia* Gistel, 1848 (Koh & Ng, 2000) and obtained several specimens of Western Australian '*C. bicolor*' from the local fishermen. At that time, the fishery for '*C. bicolor*' had just started but was growing. These specimens of '*C. bicolor*' clearly differed from *C. bicolor* s. str. in its distinctly shorter and stouter walking legs as well as its much paler colouration. In 1999, the second author obtained numerous specimens of the same species of *Chaceon* brought in from Western Australia for the Singapore seafood market. Subsequent studies by the first two authors reinforced our view that the Western Australian *Chaceon* represented an undescribed species. Davie (2002) subsequently commented that the Western Australian '*C. bicolor*' was likely to be a new species. In 2002, the third author began a parallel taxonomic study after receiving specimens obtained by Kim Smith, then undertaking a doctoral study on the biology of Western Australian *Chaceon*.