



***Liagore pulchella*, a new species of xanthid crab (Crustacea: Decapoda: Brachyura) from Vanuatu**

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Abstract

Liagore pulchella, the third known species of the genus, is described from Vanuatu. The new species is easily recognizable from the two congeners by the complete absence of red spots on the dorsal surfaces of the carapace and the pereopods. In addition, *L. pulchella* can be distinguished from *L. rubromaculata* (De Haan, 1835), and *L. erythematica* Guinot, 1971, by characters of the carapace, antenna, pereopods and male first gonopod.

Key words: *Liagore pulchella*, new species, Xanthidae, taxonomy, Vanuatu

Introduction

The xanthid genus *Liagore* De Haan, 1833 (type species *Cancer (Liagore) rubromaculata* De Haan, 1835) is one of the most recognizable members of the Xanthidae because of its egg-shaped and smooth carapace. The two known members of the genus, *L. rubromaculata* (De Haan, 1835), from the western Pacific and *L. erythematica* Guinot, 1971, from the Indian Ocean, are also characterized by the distinctive pattern of red spots and dots all over the carapace and pereopods when alive. The differences between the two species have been discussed in detail by Ng & Chen (2004: 2356, 2357).

During the SANTO Expedition to Vanuatu, tangle nets laid off the island of Santo obtained a good series of a xanthid that was clearly a species of *Liagore* but devoid of red spots. It is here described as new.

Specimens examined are deposited in the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris (MNHN); the National Science Museum, Tokyo (NSMT); and the Zoological Reference Collection (ZRC) of the Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, National University of Singapore. The abbreviations G1 and G2 refer to the male first and second pleopods respectively; while the P2–P4 refer to the first to fourth ambulatory legs respectively. The measurements provided, in millimetres, are of the carapace width (CW) and length (CL) respectively.

Family Xanthidae MacLeay, 1838

Subfamily Xanthinae MacLeay, 1838

***Liagore* De Haan, 1833**

Remarks. Ng & Chen (2004: 2356) argued that despite its atypical carapace features, *Liagore* should nevertheless be placed in the Xanthidae. They commented that while “*Liagore* is typically xanthoid, its familial