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## On the identity of *Clistocoeloma balansae* A. Milne-Edwards, 1873, and *C. tectum* (Rathbun, 1914), with description of a new species from the West Pacific (Crustacea: Decapoda: Sesarmidae)

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### Abstract

The identity of the mangrove sesarmid crab *Clistocoeloma balansae* A. Milne-Edwards, 1873, is clarified on the basis of the types from New Caledonia, and fresh material from Vanuatu and the Philippines. *Sesarma* (*Sesarma*) *tectum* Rathbun, 1914, is shown to be a junior subjective synonym of *C. balansae* A. Milne-Edwards, 1873. A new species, *C. melanesicum*, superficially similar to *C. balansae*, is described from Vanuatu, New Caledonia, and, Solomon Islands.

**Key words:** Sesarmidae, *Clistocoeloma balansae*, taxonomy, new species, West Pacific

### Introduction

Ng *et al.* (2008) listed eight species in the Indo-West Pacific sesarmid genus *Clistocoeloma* A. Milne-Edwards, 1873: *C. balansae* A. Milne-Edwards, 1873 (type species); *C. amamaparense* Rahayu & Takeda, 2000; *C. lanatum* (Alcock, 1900); *C. merguiense* De Man, 1888; *C. sinense* Shen, 1933; *C. suvaense* Edmondson, 1951; *C. tectum* (Rathbun, 1914); and *C. villosum* (A. Milne-Edwards, 1869).

The identity of the type species, *C. balansae* A. Milne-Edwards, 1873, described from New Caledonia, is problematic as it was diagnosed very briefly and the published figure is small and too simple by modern standards. This has caused problems for subsequent workers, with De Man questioning the validity of his new species (*C. merguiense* De Man, 1888) after comparisons with the poorly described type species (De Man 1896: 339). In his synopsis of *Clistocoeloma*, Tesch (1917) transferred *Sesarma* (*Sesarma*) *tectum* Rathbun, 1914, to *Clistocoeloma* and noted it was close to *C. balansae*. Tesch (1917) also suggested that *S. lanatum* closely resembled species of *Clistocoeloma* although he did not formally transfer it to this genus. Serène (1968) placed *S. lanatum* in *Clistocoeloma* in his checklist of Asian crabs, a position followed by Komai *et al.* (2004) and Ng *et al.* (2008). Shen (1933), Edmondson (1951) and Rahayu & Takeda (2000) subsequently described new species from China (*C. sinense*), Fiji (*C. suvaense*) and Irian Jaya, Indonesia (*C. amamaparense*), respectively.

Ng & Liu (1999) commented that *Sesarma villosum* A. Milne-Edwards, 1869, should be placed in *Clistocoeloma*, but without a detailed explanation. This was briefly discussed by Rahayu & Takeda (2000: 40). Davie (2002: 221) formally transferred *Sesarma villosum* A. Milne-Edwards, 1869, to *Clistocoeloma*, citing McNeill (1968: 79), who commented “Tesch (1917) draws attention to the superficial resemblance of this and other related species of *Sesarma* to the genus *Clistocoeloma*”. However, no additional justifications was provided. Komai *et al.* (2004: 41, 42) briefly discussed the generic assignment of this species in *Clistocoeloma*, following Davie (2002).

As part of an ongoing revision of *Clistocoeloma*, the authors had a chance to examine the type specimens of *C. balansae*. Studying this and related material, it became clear that while *C. balansae* has a wide range from New Caledonia to the Philippines, there was also a second undescribed sibling species present in New Caledonia and Vanuatu. *Clistocoeloma tectum* (Rathbun, 1914) also proved to be a junior subjective synonym of *C. balansae*. The