Cheramus iranicus, a new species of ghost shrimp
(Decapoda: Axiidea: Callianassidae) from the Persian Gulf, Iran

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Abstract

A new species of callianassid ghost shrimp is described from the Persian Gulf, Iran. Cheramus iranicus sp. nov. is the first member of Cheramus described from Iranian subtidal waters and can be differentiated by a large cheliped with a ventro-proximal spine on the merus and 7 spines on the ventral margin of the ischium, the endopod of the uropod has 4 movable spines on the distal margin and the posterior margin of the telson is strongly bilobed with a prominent medial tooth and two pairs of lateral movable spines. It is compared to other described Cheramus-like species showing a high degree of morphological similarity.

Key words: Cheramus iranicus sp. nov., mud shrimp, subtidal, Persian Gulf, Iranian decapods

Introduction

The taxonomy of the callianassid genus Cheramus is still very controversial as Komai et al. (2014) recently argued. The genus was first established by Bate in 1888 and was recognized as a valid genus by Manning & Felder (1991) in their seminal work on American members of this interesting family of decapods. The generic characters of Cheramus are not completely clear as many species descriptions lack male specimens, and so depend heavily on female morphology. Therefore, there are some differences in the species composition of Cheramus between different studies (Manning & Felder 1991; Tudge et al. 2000; Sakai 2011).

In a recent study by Ngoc-Ho (2014), Cheramus sibogae (de Man, 1905), which previously was transferred to Cheramus by Tudge et al. (2000), was retained by her in Callianassa, as a new species—Callianassa coriolisae, pending further revision of this group and the genus Cheramus. In another study, Sakai & Türkay (2014) transferred Biffarius pacificus Guzmán & Thatje, 2003 to Cheramus. However, the assignment of Biffarius pacificus to Cheramus is questioned by Komai et al. (2014).

In previous studies conducted in the Persian Gulf a total of 18 species of axiideans have been recorded by Sakai & Türkay (1995), Sakai (2005), Dworschak (2009), Sepahvand & Sari (2010) and Sepahvand et al. (2013). In the present contribution Cheramus iranicus sp. nov. is described from the Persian Gulf and provisionally assigned to this genus. The new species represents the first assigned to Cheramus from the region.

Material and methods

Specimens were collected from subtidal, sandy-muddy substrate with shell fragments in the Persian Gulf (Fig. 1) (26°35′12.87″N, 55°08′0.67″E) in February 2014 by a Van Veen grab. They are deposited in the Iranian National Institute for Oceanography Collection (INIOC). Materials were measured with Vernier calipers, and illustrated