

***Erimetopus vandenbrandeni* (Balss, 1936) n. comb., with notes on the taxonomy of the genus *Erimetopus* Rathbun, 1894 (Brachyura: Potamoidea: Potamonautidae) from Central Africa**

NEIL CUMBERLIDGE¹ & SADIE K. REED

Department of Biology, Northern Michigan University, Marquette, Michigan 49855, USA

¹ ncumberl@nmu.edu

Abstract

The Central African freshwater crab genus *Erimetopus* (family Potamonautidae) is revived to accommodate two species, *E. brazzae* (A. Milne-Edwards, 1886) and *E. vandenbrandeni* (Balss, 1936) n. comb. The genus *Erimetopus* Rathbun, 1894, and the two species assigned to it here, are redescribed from type material, and lectotypes for each species are selected. *Erimetopus spinosus* Rathbun, 1894 is judged here to be a junior synonym of *E. brazzae*, and *P. (E.) b. frontospinulosa* is treated as a subspecies of *E. brazzae*. Illustrations and photographs of the type specimens of these taxa are provided, and new gonopod evidence based on *E. vandenbrandeni* is evaluated. The distributions of the species of *Erimetopus* are described and discussed, and keys to the genera of African freshwater crabs and to the species of *Erimetopus* are provided.

Key words: Crustacea, Brachyura, Potamoidea, Potamonautidae, *Erimetopus*, freshwater crab, taxonomy, Central Africa, natural history, Congo River, rainforest

Introduction

This work aims to stabilize the taxonomy of the little-known Central African freshwater crab genus *Erimetopus* Rathbun, 1894, which is endemic to the lower Congo River and its tributaries. *Erimetopus* has long attracted the interest of carcinologists because its subhexagonal/rounded carapace outline and distinctive arrangement of spines on the carapace margins and pereopods not only distinguish it from other genera of potamonautid freshwater crabs found in Africa (Cumberlidge 1999), but also impart a superficial resemblance to some species of South American trichodactylid freshwater crabs (see below).

The type species of *Erimetopus brazzae* (*Thelphusa brazzae* A. Milne-Edwards, 1886) was first described from an adult female specimen from Ngancin (= Ngabé), Republic of