



A new species of freshwater crab of the genus *Microthelphusa* (Brachyura: Pseudothelphusidae) from a remote isolated cloud forest on a tabletop mountain in western Guyana, South America

NEIL CUMBERLIDGE

Department of Biology, Northern Michigan University, Marquette, Michigan 49855, USA.
ncumberl@nmu.edu

Abstract

A new species of freshwater crab of the genus *Microthelphusa* Pretzmann, 1968, from Guyana, South America is described. *Microthelphusa meansi*, new species, was collected from a remote isolated cloud forest in the Wokomung Massif, a tabletop mountain (*tepui*) in western Guyana at over 1,000 m above sea level. The conspicuous horseshoe-like marginal lobe and the dome-like auxiliary cephalic lobe of the first gonopod clearly distinguish this species from all 12 congeners.

Key words: Crustacea, Brachyura, Pseudothelphusidae, *Microthelphusa*, freshwater crab, taxonomy, new species; *tepui*, Wokomung Massif, Guyana

Introduction

A recent biodiversity survey of the remote Wokomung Massif in Guyana, South America by Dr. D. Bruce Means of the Coastal Plains Institute and Conservancy, Tallahassee, Florida, USA, revealed the existence of a new species of freshwater crab belonging to the genus *Microthelphusa* Pretzmann, 1968, which is described. The discovery of a new species of freshwater crab is part of a wider exploration of the biodiversity of the Guyana Shield that is one of the most inaccessible and unknown areas in the world. This genus of freshwater crabs belongs to the family Pseudothelphusidae Ortmann, 1893, in the tribe Kingsleyini Bott, 1970, which includes nine genera from northeastern South America. The 12 species of *Microthelphusa* so far described are distributed in an area that includes the highlands of western and eastern Venezuela and western Guyana. The species of *Microthelphusa* are *M. barinensis* Rodríguez, 1980, *M. bolivari* Rodríguez, 1980, *M. forcarti* (Pretzmann, 1967), *M. ginesi* Rodríguez & Esteves, 1972, *M. odaelcae* (Bott, 1970), *M. racenisi* (Rodríguez, 1966), *M. rodriguezii* Pretzmann, 1968, *M. somanni* (Bott, 1967), *M. sucrensis* Rodríguez & Campos, 2000, *M. turumikiri* Rodríguez, 1980, *M. viloriai* Suárez, 2006, and *M. wymani* (Rathbun, 1905). All of these species, with the exception of *M. rodriguezii*, are found at high altitude localities, as is the species described here from the Wokomung Massif. The new species is compared with the other members of the genus and is distinguished by characters of the mesial, auxiliary cephalic, and marginal lobes of the first gonopod. The present study extends the distribution of *Microthelphusa* in Guyana to include the western Potaro-Siparuni highlands region. The material is deposited in the US National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C. (USNM).