



## A new genus of palaemonid shrimp (Crustacea: Decapoda: Palaemonidae) to accommodate *Leander belindae* Kemp, 1925, with a redescription of the species\*

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\* In: De Grave, S. & Fransen, C.H.J.M. (2010) Contributions to shrimp taxonomy. *Zootaxa*, 2372, 1–414.

### Abstract

A redescription of the little known shrimp *Leander belindae* Kemp, 1925 based on syntypical material as well as some previously unreported museum specimens is provided. In view of its aberrant morphology, a new genus, *Rhopalaemon* gen. nov., is erected. The new genus is most similar to *Palaemon* Weber, 1795, but can be easily distinguished from that genus, and all other palaemonine genera, by the following combination of characters: propodus of the ambulatory pereopods distally expanded; branchiostegal tooth and groove present; basal crest on rostrum absent; appendix interna on the first pleopod of males absent; and mandibular palp present.

**Key words:** Crustacea, Decapoda, Palaemonidae, *Rhopalaemon*, new genus

### Introduction

*Leander belindae* Kemp, 1925 was described on the basis of 75 specimens taken from rock pools at Kilakarai in the Gulf of Mannar and a further specimen taken from Cape Comorin. Additional collections of this species have been reported only twice since its description (Kurien 1954, eleven specimens from Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu; Ravindranath 1979, nine specimens from Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh) and, to the authors' knowledge, the species has only been mentioned in the literature (mostly as *Palaemon belindae*) six times following its description (Holthuis 1950; Kurien 1954; Dutt & Ravindranath 1974; Ravindranath 1979; Pereira 1997; Jayachandran 2001). Holthuis (1950) transferred the species to the genus *Palaemon* Weber, 1795 and most subsequent authors have accepted this generic placement. With the exception of Jayachandran's (2001) verbatim reproduction of Kemp's description, and short diagnoses provided by Kurien (1954) and Ravindranath (1979), the aforementioned references just cite the species name without providing further details and no further descriptive information is available for the species. Syntypes belonging to *L. belindae* present in the collections of the Natural History Museum (London) and the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden (= Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum, Naturalis) as well as some previously unreported specimens held in the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris provide the opportunity to redescribe the species. A re-examination of these specimens has revealed that the species cannot be satisfactorily be included in either *Leander* Desmarest, 1849 or *Palaemon* as they are presently defined, nor any of the other Palaemoninae genera, and therefore a new genus is erected here to accommodate the species.

The following abbreviations are used in the text: pocl (post-orbital carapace length), ov. (ovigerous), RMNH (Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie = Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum, Naturalis, Leiden), NHM (Natural History Museum, London), MNHN (Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris).