



On the nomenclature of the palaemonid names *Palaemon spinipes* Desmarest, 1817, *Palaemon spinipes* Schenkel, 1902, and *Macrobrachium wallacei* Wowor & Ng, 2008 (Crustacea: Decapoda: Caridea)

PETER K. L. NG¹ & DAISY WOWOR²

¹Tropical Marine Science Institute and Department of Biological Sciences, National University of Singapore, Kent Ridge, Singapore 119260, Republic of Singapore. E-mail: dbsngkl@nus.edu.sg

²Division of Zoology, Research Center for Biology, Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), Jalan Raya Jakarta Bogor Km 46, Cibinong 16911, Indonesia. E-mail: daisy_wowor@yahoo.com

Holthuis (1995) commented that there were two forms that have been referred to the widespread Indo-West Pacific Giant Freshwater Prawn *Macrobrachium rosenbergii* (De Man, 1879), and they should be recognized as subspecies: *M. rosenbergii rosenbergii* (De Man, 1897) sensu stricto (eastern Indonesia, New Guinea, Australia and Philippines), and *M. rosenbergii dacqueti* (Sunier, 1925) (Sundaic Southeast Asia, Indochina and South Asia). Wowor & Ng (2007) argued that the two subspecies should be regarded as distinct species – *M. rosenbergii* (De Man, 1879) and *M. dacqueti* (Sunier, 1925). They showed that the two species, in addition to their non-overlapping distributions, can be distinguished by the relative height of the rostral base, spination of the second to fifth pereopods in adults, shape of the fourth thoracic sternite as well as live coloration. However, in doing so, Wowor & Ng (2007) created a major nomenclatural problem, as the species that is widely fished in South and Southeast Asia as well as Indochina, and also extensively cultured throughout the world should actually be known as *M. dacqueti* and not *M. rosenbergii*. To minimize taxonomic and nomenclatural confusion, they noted that it would be preferable if the name “*M. rosenbergii*” could be retained for the commercially more valuable and extensively researched species from Southeast Asia. To this effect, Wowor & Ng (2008) requested the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN) to use its plenary powers to set aside the previous type fixation for *Palaemon rosenbergii* De Man, 1879 (a holotype female from Andai, New Guinea, in the Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum, Leiden, catalogue number RMNH D 1097) and to designate the lectotype specimen of *Palaemon dacqueti* Sunier, 1925 (a male specimen from Java, Indonesia, in the Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum, Leiden, catalogue number RMNH D 1065), as its neotype. This would conserve the name *Palaemon rosenbergii* De Man, 1879, for the Southeast Asian species. The Commission agreed and ruled that this be done (ICZN 2010, Opinion 2253).

With the name for the commercially important species fixed, there was a second problem with the name of the species that is found in eastern Indonesia, New Guinea, Australia and Philippines which had originally been called *Palaemon rosenbergii* by De Man (1879). Wowor & Ng (2007: 326) noted that “Schenkel (1902) described *Palaemon spinipes* from Kema, Minahassa, northern Sulawesi ... Re-examination of the type specimen shows it fits well with the characters of *M. rosenbergii* De Man, 1879 s. str. Therefore, *P. spinipes* Schenkel, 1902, should be regarded as a synonym of *M. rosenbergii*”. In their application to the ICZN, Wowor & Ng (2008: 291) commented that the “... only synonym, *Palaemon spinipes* Schenkel, 1902 [of *M. rosenbergii*], is a junior homonym of *Palaemon spinipes* Desmarest, 1817 (p. 513), and, as such, is unavailable. A new name, *Macrobrachium wallacei* sp. nov., is here proposed for the species identified as *Macrobrachium rosenbergii* in Wowor & Ng (2007). A male measuring 79 mm in carapace length, collected from the Laloki River ca. 30 miles from Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, by M. Rapson, 1972, and deposited in the Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum, Leiden, The Netherlands, under the catalogue number RMNH D 28730, is designated here as the holotype of *Macrobrachium wallacei*. The species is named after Alfred Wallace, the famed 19th century English naturalist and discoverer of ‘Wallace’s Line’.”

When voting in favour of Wowor & Ng’s (2008) proposal, one of the Commissioners commented (ICZN 2010, Opinion 2253: 259):

“Brothers said that the statement, ‘A new name, *Macrobrachium wallacei* sp. nov., is here proposed for the species identified as *Macrobrachium rosenbergii* in Wowor & Ng (2007)’ surely actually referred to *Palaemon*