



A new genus and species of anchialine Hymenosomatidae (Crustacea, Decapoda, Brachyura) from Samar, Philippines

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Abstract

A new genus and species of brachyuran crab, *Samarplax principe* (family Hymenosomatidae) is described from an anchialine cave in Samar Island, Philippines. This cavernicolous species lacks rostrum and has degenerated eyes, possesses two small spines at the lateral margin of the carapace, has a proportionally shorter projected merus of the third maxilliped, an almost flat epistome and brush-like setae instead of teeth along the cutting edges of the chelae. The complete loss of visual organs and pigmentation, the long but slender ambulatory legs and large egg size suggest a completely hypogeal lifestyle for this species. This is the first species of Hymenosomatidae recorded from an anchialine cave in the Philippines exhibiting true troglomorphic adaptations.

Key words: *Samarplax principe* new genus, new species, taxonomy, Philippines, Samar, Principe Cave, anchialine cave, troglobite

Introduction

The Philippine archipelago consists of over 7,000 islands, most of which are composed of Paleozoic to Tertiary limestone and fringed with Pleistocene uplifted coral reefs. Many limestone caves are known from the region, particularly a number of anchialine caves, (Fig. 1) i.e., those with no surface connection with the sea and containing saline or brackish water that fluctuates with the tides (cf. Holthuis 1973; Stock *et al.* 1986; Sket 1996).

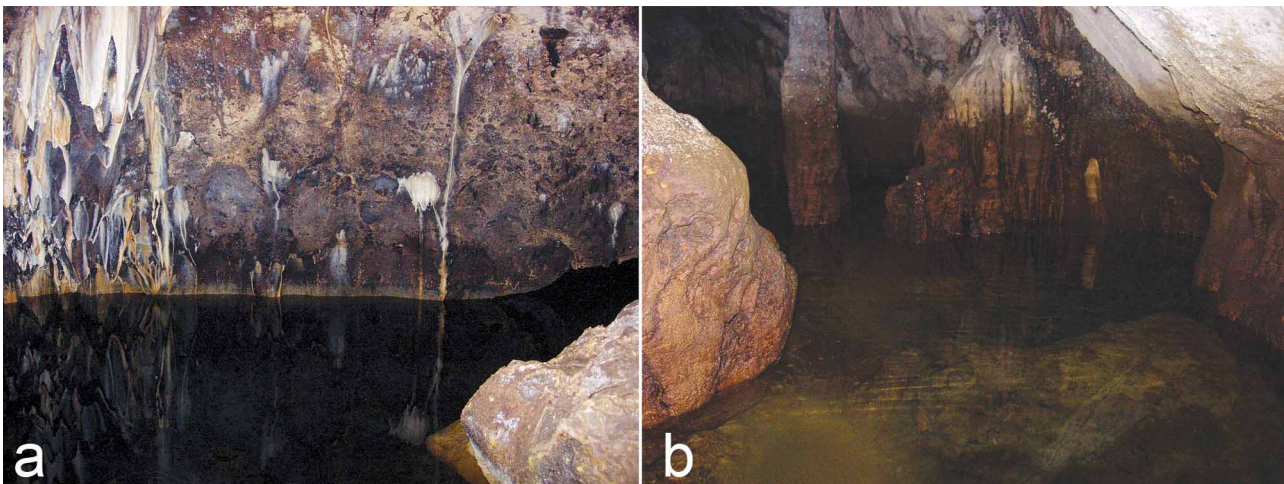


FIGURE 1. Type locality of *Samarplax principe* new genus, new species, Principe Cave, Guiuan, Eastern Samar, Philippines: a, discolored rock surface due to guano deposits; b, high tide marks on the walls..