



The identity of *Pilumnoplax acanthomerus* Rathbun, 1911 (Crustacea: Decapoda: Brachyura: Xanthidae), with new records from the central and western Pacific*

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Abstract

The identity of the rare xanthid crab, *Pilumnoplax acanthomerus* Rathbun, 1911, originally described from the Amirante Islands in the western Indian Ocean, is elucidated. Števc̆ić (2005) transferred the species from *Pilumnoplax* Stimpson, 1858, to a new genus, *Linnaeoxantho*. This monotypic genus is re-diagnosed and new morphological characters are highlighted. New records from Ryukyu and Line Islands, in the western and central Pacific, respectively, are reported. *Linnaeoxantho* is compared with the morphologically similar *Melybia* Stimpson, 1871, from the western Atlantic, and their affinities are discussed. *Linnaeoxanthinae* Števc̆ić, 2005, is here recognised as a valid xanthid subfamily for *Linnaeoxantho* and *Melybia*, and is considered to have priority over *Melybiidae* Števc̆ić, 2005.

Keywords: Xanthoidea, *Pilumnoplax*, *Linnaeoxantho acanthomerus*, *Melybia*, range extension, Amirante Islands, Ryukyu Islands, Line Islands, western Atlantic

Introduction

Rathbun (1911) described an unusual species, *Pilumnoplax acanthomerus* from a male and an ovigerous female collected off the Amirante Islands, western Indian Ocean, by the Percy Sladen Trust Expedition to the Indian Ocean in 1905. Later, in his list of Indo-West Pacific Brachyura, Serène (1968) introduced the manuscript name “*Neopilumnoplax*” and assigned to this genus a number of species including *P. acanthomerus*; but the species epithet was preceded by a question mark (Table 1). In his introduction, Serène (1968: 33) wrote “The classification of BALSS (1957) with the changes proposed by SERÈNE (1965) is amended by taking into consideration amendments since suggested mainly by GUINOT (1967–68). It is still provisional...”. Probably as a direct consequence of this, *Neopilumnoplax* was only listed by Serène (1968: 90) as a “manuscript name”, without diagnosis or designation of a type species and the name is therefore a nomen nudum. However, as part of her preliminary research into natural brachyuran groupings, Guinot (1969) commented on a number of problematic goneplacid taxa. *Neopilumnoplax* was discussed in detail by Guinot (1969: 689), together with a footnote in English communicated by Serène. In this footnote, Serène stated that as indicated by Tesch (1918), *Pilumnoplax* Stimpson, 1858, was partly a synonym of *Eucrate* De Haan, 1835, *Heteropilumnus* De Man, 1895, and *Lophoplax* Tesch, 1918. Serène then established *Neopilumnoplax* as a new genus to include the species described after Stimpson (1858) by providing a diagnosis for his new taxon mainly adapted from a definition used by Miers (1886) for *Pilumnoplax heterochir* (Studer, 1883). The footnote continued in French, with Guinot (1969) saying that Serène had chosen *P. heterochir* as the type species and that for the moment *Neopilumnoplax* was limited to this species and *P. americana* Rathbun, 1898. Through these comments, Guinot made the name *Neopilumnoplax* available, and she attributed the new taxon to Serène. Considering the manner in which *Neopilumnoplax* was