

ON THE OCCURRENCE OF PUERULUS OF
SPINY LOBSTER *PANULIRUS POLYPHAGUS* (HERBST)
ALONG THE MADRAS COAST

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ABSTRACT

The occurrence of the puerulus stage of the spiny lobster, *Panulirus polyphagus* (Herbst) is reported for the first time from the Madras coast along with brief notes on the material.

Although no regular lobster fishery has been observed from the Madras coast, stray occurrence of *Panulirus polyphagus* and *P. homarus* has been recorded from the rocky stretches of Royapuram shore. While observing the trawler catches landed at Royapuram centre, single specimen of the puerulus stage of the spiny lobster, *Panulirus polyphagus* (Herbst) was collected on 23-4-1972. As there is no earlier information on the developmental stages of this species from the Madras coast, the present record is of considerable interest.

The specimen measured 23.2 mm in total length 9.0 mm and 6.5 mm respectively in carapace length and breadth. The antennule was 11.0 mm long and the antenna, 91.0 mm.

The carapace is flat, rectangular and provided with a pair of supraorbital as well as anterolateral spines. Two pairs of small spines are situated behind the supraorbital spines and one spine is found in front of the lateral keel on either side. Spinules are absent on the posterior margin of the carapace. Abdomen is narrow and each abdominal segment has backwardly directed lateral spine. The antennal flagellum is with alternate brownish red bands and the tip of the abdominal tergites are pinkish. The specimen on hand is found to agree with the diagnostic features given for the puerulus of *P. polyphagus* by Dashmukh (1966).

The occurrence of puerulus stage of *P. polyphagus* has been recorded from Bombay in October-February (Dashmukh 1966), from Goa in April-May (Thomas 1977), from Cochin in October-May (Rao and Kathirvel 1971) and from Kakinada in December-January (Dutt and Ravindranath 1975). The

present record from Madras is in April. Since all the records are encountered between October and May, it is probable that the puerulus settles down in suitable grounds during this period.

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