

ON THE OCCURRENCE OF *CHARYBDIS (CHARYBDIS) HELLERII*  
(A. MILNE EDWARDS) (DECAPODA : PORTUNIDAE) ALONG  
THE WEST COAST OF INDIA

ABSTRACT

The occurrence of *Charybdis (Charybdis) hellerii* (A. Milne Edwards) is reported for the first time from the west coast of India. A brief note on the morphological features of the species is given.

WHILE carrying out fishing operations, by a trawl net in the Cochin Backwater for juvenile penaeid prawns, two specimens of *Charybdis (Charybdis) hellerii* (A. Milne Edwards)—one male and one ovigerous female were obtained on 22-12-1972 and 11-4-1973 respectively. A perusal of literature on the distribution of this species has shown that it has been reported only from the east coast of India—Tuticorin and Rameswaram (Henderson, 1893), Gulf of Mannar (Sankarankutty, 1966) and the River Hooghly (Chopra, 1935)—although its geographical distribution extends from Mediterranean to Hawaii (Stephenson *et al.*, 1957). The present material is the first record of the species from the west coast of India. A brief note on the morphological features of the species is given below.

The authors are greatly indebted to Shri K. H. Mohamed and to Dr. P. Veda-  
yasa Rao for critical reading of the manuscript and offering valuable suggestions.

Family : Portunidae

Genus : *Charybdis* de Haan

*Charybdis (Charybdis) hellerii* (A. Milne Edwards)

*Charybdis (Goniosoma) mergulensis* Alcock, 1889, p. 55 ; Chopra, 1935, p. 484 ; Barnard, 1950, p. 168.

*Goniosoma helleri* Henderson, 1893, p. 375.

*Charybdis (Charybdis) hellerii* Leene, 1938, p. 44 ; Stephenson, Hudson and Campbell, 1957, p. 497 ; Sankarankutty, 1966, p. 348.

The body measurements of the two specimens are as follows :

	Male (mm)	Female (mm)
Breadth of carapace	63.70	51.00
Length of carapace	39.80	31.00
Breadth of carapace/Length of carapace	1.60	1.64
Length of right cheliped	85.00	61.40
Length of left cheliped	82.30	59.40
Length of merus of swimming leg	12.20	8.80
Breadth of merus of swimming leg	6.60	4.70

In morphological details, the present specimens fully agree with the descriptions given by Leene (1938). In live condition, the white longitudinal mark extends upto the gastric region from just below the frontal region. The carapace and the chelipeds of male are glabrous, while those of female are fully covered with dense pile. The arm of the cheliped of the male in the present collection has four spines on its anterior border as against three observed by Leene (1938), although in case of female, there are only three spines. The first pleopod of male is broader proximally and has a long narrow neck with slightly upcurved tip. The inner border has several spines well beyond the membrane and are irregularly arranged. The outer border has a row of spines; those near the tip are small, thin and closely arranged. The developing eggs carried by the pleopods are bright yellow, spherical, with diameter ranging from 0.224 to 0.322 mm (mode at 0.280 mm).

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\* Not referred to in original.