

NOTE

Panulirus versicolor (Latrielle), A New Record from the Central Andhra Coast (Bay of Bengal)

Previously, a remarkably big specimen of *Panulirus panicilliatas* (Olivier), considered to be a new record along the Indian coasts (Satyanarayana, 1961) was obtained from the south-west coast. The present report, is on a single lobster of moderate size, distinctly different from the other lobsters, obtained on 10-6-1983 by bottom trawl from off Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh. On identification, it has been found to be *Panulirus versicolor* (Latrielle) whose occurrence here, have not, so far, been recorded; though Premkumar & Daniel (1973) after examining the lobster material and literature of Indian Ocean, have reported its availability in the Gulf of Mannar, Andaman & Nicobar and opined that this is a rare commercial species, while the other three i.e. *Panulirus homarus*, *P. polyphagus* and *P. ornatus* are common along the east coast. Shanmugham and Kathirvel (1983) in their survey of lobster resources in Andaman & Nicobar islands, have obtained two specimens (one male) for the first time from these islands. Prasad and Tampi (1969), while discussing the distribution of panulirids have reported, that *P. versicolor* is also one of the eight species of panulirus known to occur along the Indian coast. De Man (1916), in his monogram on Siboga expeditions, described in detail the specimens obtained by them and recorded its distribution. According to Chaapgar and Deshmukh (1961), this is the rarest species in Bombay coast, but Rai (1933) said otherwise, which was later endorsed by Chopra (1939).

According to the distribution given by De Man (1916) it is known from Mauritius, Mascat, Seycheles Bank, Chritmas Island, Java, Bandra Sea, Aru islands, North Celebas, New Holland, New Britannia, Matipi, Fiji islands, Samora islands and Japan. In India so far it is known to occur along the west coast of India, Gulf of Mannar, Andaman

and Nicobar islands and extends upto the north of Bay of Bengal. As it is not hitherto reported this is the first record from Andhra coast.

Marine conditions on the day of capture

The lobster was caught on 10-6-1983 in a 20 m four seam otter trawl, in the forenoon between 0815 to 0915 at a depth of 25-30 m (lat. 16° 45' & long 82° 30') off Kakinada. The sea bottom was muddy. Sea was extremely rough due to strong winds, sky was cloudy with light showers.

Brief description of the specimen

The lobster caught is male weighing 760 g with a total length of 182 mm. The antennular plate has four spines that stand in a quadrangle; those of the posterior pair are little shorter than the anterior ones. Denticles in between the spines are absent. The 2nd joint of the antennular peduncle just reaches beyond the tip of the peduncle of the outer antenna. The logs of the first pair reach almost this tip, while those of the third extend by a little more than the dactyli beyond it; the logs of the 5th pair attain distal end of the penultimate joint.

The exopodite of the 2nd maxiliped bears a distinct rudimentary and inarticulate antennule, wine red in colour and is fringed with some brown hairs along its margins.

Legs are greenish with white stripes, carapace marbled with confluent black spots and blotches edged with white, transverse band, pale whitish yellow, and banded by bluish black on either side. Thus, the specimen is confirmed to be *P. versicolor*.

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