

NOTE

A NEW INDO-PACIFIC PENAEID IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, SOLENOCERA INDICA NATARAJ.

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Seven penaeid species are known to occur on the Mediterranean shelf of Egypt, *Penaeus kerathurus* Forsk., *P. semisulcatus* De Haan, *P. japonicus* Bate, *Metapenaeus monoceros* Fabricius, *M. stebbingi* Nobili, *Trachypenaeus curvirostris* Stimpson, and *Parapenaeus longirostris* Lucas.

They are not homogenous in their biogeographic origin. Only two; *Penaeus kerathurus* and *Papapenaeus longirostris* are endemic Mediterranean species (Heldt, 1938; Holthuis & Gottlieb, 1958). Since the Suez Canal became operational in 1872, the shrimp fauna of the Mediterranean was enriched by the following five species: *Metapenaeus stebbingi* an endemic species to the Red Sea, was recorded from Port Said where it was already abundant on the fishmarket in 1924 (Balss, 1927) and later from Alexandria (Balss, 1936). *M. monoceros*, widespread in the Indo-Pacific Ocean, and the Red Sea (Balss, 1927; Al-Kholy & El-Hawary, 1970) was collected from Port-Said in 1924 by the Cambridge Expedition (Balss, 1927). The Indo-Pacific and Red Sea *Penaeus japonicus* and *P. semisoleatus* (Balss, 1927; Kubo, 1949; Al-Kholy and El-Hawary, 1970) were recorded from the Gulf of Alexandrette by Monod in 1931 (after Balss, 1936) and from Alexandria in Egypt by Balss (1936). *Trachypenaeus curvirostris*, widespread in the Indo-Pacific, in Japan (Kubo, 1949) and the Indo-west Pacific (Hall, 1962) was recorded from the Suez Canal (Balss, 1927), Haifa (Steinitz, 1934, after Balss, loc.cit.) and Alexandria (Balss, 1936).

In the spring of 1971, four unripe females of *Solenocera indica* Nataraj were caught off the Bay of Abu-Kir by the Soviet-Egyptian Expedition on board the "Ichthyolog". (Fig.1). They were 53 mm. in length. No representatives of this species has been recorded before from our waters, nor from any part of the East Mediterranean. According to Kunju (1967), the distribution of the species is as follows; East and West coasts of India, Nergui Archipelago and Singapore, coast of Malaysia, North Botne and Hong-Kong. While the Solenocerina are mostly deep-sea forms, *S. indica* is definitely a littoral species, inhabiting waters of 40 m or less. The four

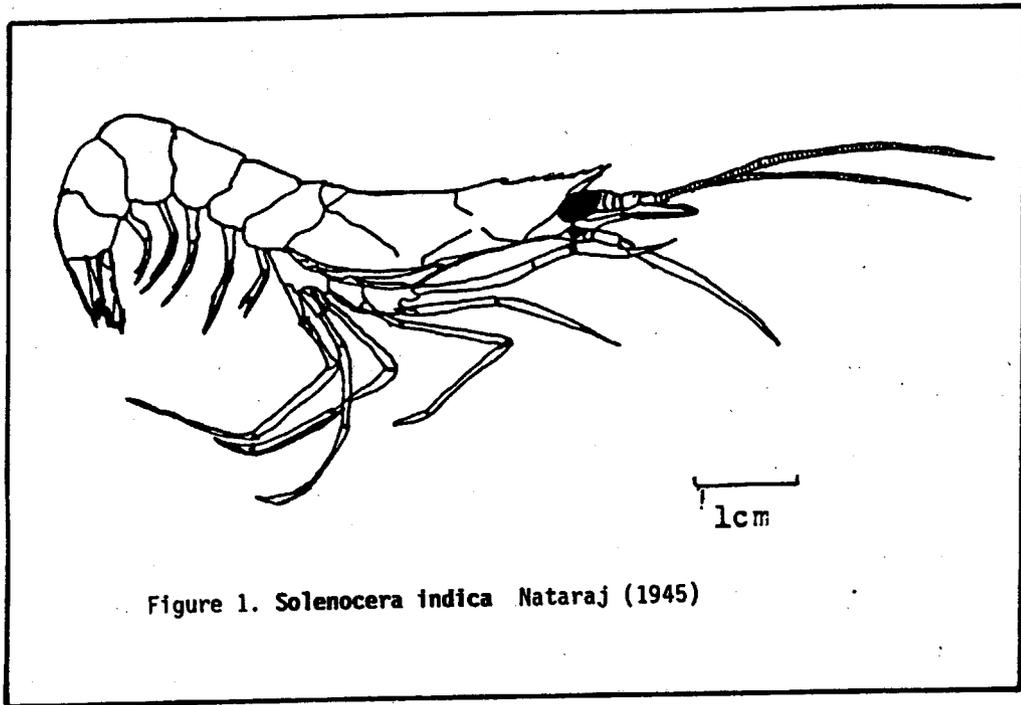


Figure 1. *Solenocera indica* Nataraj (1945)

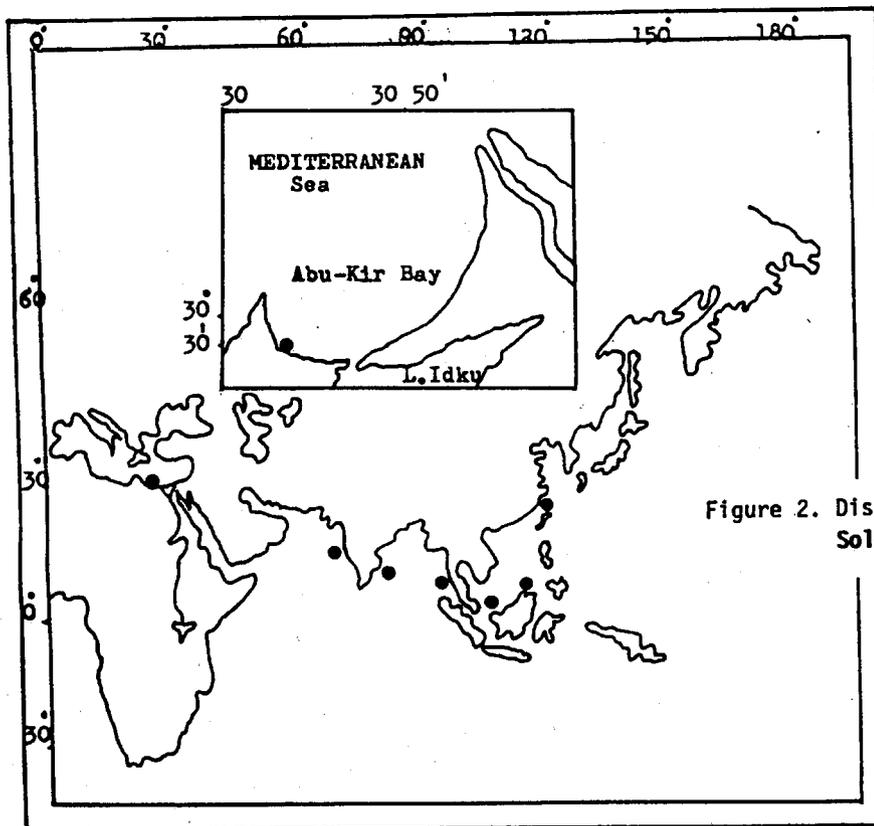


Figure 2. Distribution of *Solenocera indica*

females obtained were caught at 23 m depth, at a position just north of Abu Kir Bay ($30^{\circ} 35' 8''$, $30^{\circ} 10' 2''$ E). (Fig.2).

The specimens obtained agreed in all points with the species diagnosis as given by Kunju (1967). The carapace was smooth and glabrous, the rostrum straight slightly ascending, reaching to the tip of the basal segment of the antennular peduncle. It is armed with six equidistal acute teeth, its lower margin devoid of teeth. The post rostral carina well-defined. The hepatic groove is well marked. Post-orbital and antennal spines absent. The pterygostomial spine was also absent. Telson unarmed, without lateral spines. *S. membranceum* (Risso), a relatively deep-water species in its adult stages, is widespread in both East and West Mediterranean and in the North Atlantic (Heldt, 1938; Holthuis and Gottlieb, 1958). It can be distinguished from *S. indica* by the presence of short postorbital and antennal spines, a short pterygostomial spine, and of two lateral spines on the telson.

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