

ON THE OCCURRENCE OF CARIDINA
(*ATYIDAE, DECAPODA*)
IN TRAVANCORE

WHILE engaged on a Faunistic survey of the Decapod crustacea of Travancore, chiefly the prawns of the Penæid and Palæmonaid group, a few species of *Caridina* were obtained from certain localities of this State. Probably this is the first record of the occurrence of this genus in Travancore. The collection consists of the following four species:—

1. *Caridina gracilirostris* de Man.¹

C. gracilirostris occurs in large numbers among the aquatic vegetation on the border of the Veli lake. Large females collected in July (1939) were found to carry numerous eggs in their brood pouch. The largest ovigerous female in the collection is 35 mm. and the largest male 30 mm. in length.

2. *C. lævis* Heller.²

Two collections of this species were made, one in September and another in November 1939, from among the aquatic vegetation in the submerged paddy fields of Kuttanad in central Travancore. The collection includes a number of ovigerous females measuring from 14 to 20 mm. in length. The number of eggs in the different individuals varies from 40 to 60. The eggs of this species are distinctly larger than those of the other species recorded from Travancore and measure about 0.7 to 1.0 mm. along the long axis and from 0.4 to 0.5 mm. along the short axis. Live specimens are light brown in colour.

3. *C. nilotica* (Roux) var. *gracilipes* de Man.³

Three males, two ovigerous females and three young ones of this variety were collected from Kuttanad in central Travancore. One point of difference, however, to be noted between the present collection and the named examples in the Indian Museum is, that the former are slightly larger, the ovigerous females measuring about 24 mm. and the largest male 21.6 mm. in length. Compared to *C. lævis* this variety appears to be rather rare in Kuttanad. Live specimens are dark brown in colour.

4. *C. weberi* de Man.⁴ var.

The Water Analyst of the Wellington Water

Works, Trivandrum, placed at my disposal a few specimens of this species, which he collected from the water supply mains, in March 1940. The largest male is 13.5 mm. and the largest female 15.5 mm. in length. The collection does not include any ovigerous female.

These specimens are closely allied to the variety 'sumatrensis'* inasmuch as they possess a number of dorsal teeth on the carapace behind the orbit, and that the palmer portion of the second peræopod is more than half the length of the dactylus.

One noteworthy fact which emerges from the study of the local distribution of these species is that while *C. gracilirostris* is very common in the Veli lake, a small brackish water lake situated three miles north of Trivandrum, it is not found in central Travancore. Similarly, *C. lævis* and *C. nilotica* var. *gracilipes*, the common species of central Travancore, are not found in the Veli lake. This may be due to the fact that the species found in the Veli lake is a brackish water form, while the species found in central Travancore are exclusively fresh water in their distribution. The Veli lake is in direct communication with the sea during certain months of the year and is subject to varying conditions of salinity. But the localities from where *C. lævis* and *C. nilotica* var. *gracilipes* were collected, are purely fresh water areas beyond tidal influence. This difference may probably account for the conspicuous absence of *C. gracilirostris* in central Travancore.

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^{1, 2} de Man, *Max Weber's Zoolog.*, 1892, pp. 365-399, text and plates.

³ —, *Rec. Ind. Mus.*, 1908, 2, p. 270. pl. 20, figs. 7, 7a and 7b.

⁴ Kemp, S., *Ibid.*, 1913, 8, pp. 305 and 306, pl. 29, figs. 24 and 25, pl. 20, figs. 26 and 28.

* "The variety 'sumatrensis' was recorded from Sumatra (de Man, 1892) from Engano Island near Sumatra (Nobili, 1900) and from Cochin, China, Siam and environs of Bombay (Bouvier, 1905)."

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