



The coral-associated shrimp genus *Pontonides* (Caridea, Palaemonidae, Pontoniinae) in Nhatrang Bay, Vietnam, with description of two new species

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Abstract

Three of the six known species of the palaemonid shrimp genus *Pontonides* Borradaile, 1917 are reported from Nhatrang Bay, Vietnam. *Pontonides unciger* Calman, 1939 is redescribed based on an ovigerous female collected from the bushy black coral, *Antipathes* sp. (Antipatharia, Antipathidae), at a depth of 40–45 m. *Pontonides maldivensis* (Borradaile, 1917) associated with the coral *Tubastrea micrantha* Ehrenberg, 1834 (Scleractinia, Dendrophylliidae) and *P. asperulatus* Bruce, 2005 associated with the sea whip *Cirripathes* sp. (Antipatharia, Antipathidae) are recorded for the first time from Vietnam, and the latter species - for the first time outside their type locality. Two new species, *P. ankeri* n. sp., and *P. taitanae* n. sp., are described from a sea whip *Cirripathes* sp. and from bushy black coral *Rhipidipathes* sp. (Antipatharia, Antipathidae), respectively. A diagnosis of the genus *Pontonides* and a key to all currently recognized species are provided.

Key words: Decapoda, Caridea, *Pontonides*, new species, records, Vietnam, Indo-Pacific, Antipatharia, Scleractinia, black corals, sea whips, symbiosis

Introduction

In the most-recent revision of the symbiotic shrimp genus *Pontonides* Borradaile, 1917, Bruce (2005) recognized six valid species in the Indo-West Pacific. *Pontonides asperulatus* Bruce, 2005 and *P. loloata* Bruce, 2005, both associates of whip corals, *Cirripathes* spp. (Antipatharia, Antipathidae), are presently known only from their type localities in Papua New Guinea (Bruce 2005). *Pontonides maldivensis* (Borradaile, 1915) associated with the stony coral, *Tubastrea micrantha* Ehrenberg (Scleractinia, Dendrophylliidae), is known from numerous Indo-West Pacific localities, from Kenya to Hawaii (Bruce 2005). *Pontonides sibogae* Bruce, 2005, possibly associated with another dendrophylliid coral, *Dendrophyllia ijimae* Yabe, is presently known only from Indonesia and Japan (Bruce 2005).

Pontonides unciger was described by Calman (1939) on the basis of specimen collected at a depth of 55 m in the Southern Red Sea, without any data on its host. Since then, *P. unciger* has been recorded from numerous localities in the Indo-West Pacific, on black corals, *Antipathes* spp. and *Cirripathes* spp., and on the scleractinian coral, *Dendrophyllia* sp. (e.g., Holthuis 1952; Fujino & Miyake 1969; Bruce 1978; Monod 1979; Heard 1986; Fransen 1994). Bruce (2005) provided a partial redescription of the holotype of *P. unciger*, confirming previous identifications from bushy antipatharian hosts in Kenya (Bruce 1976a) and the Marquesas Islands (Monod 1979), and also noted that "... the species with two broad transverse bands across the carapace, often referred to *P. unciger*, such as in Debelius (2001: 194), is a distinct innominate species". The rather conspicu-