

Two new species of *Pleistacantha* Miers, 1879 from the Indo-West Pacific region (Crustacea, Decapoda, Majidae)

SHANE T. AHYONG¹ & TIMOTHY LEE²

¹Marine Biodiversity and Biosecurity, National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, Private Bag 14901, Kilbirnie, Wellington, New Zealand.

²Sydney Grammar School, College St., Darlinghurst, NSW 2010, Australia

Abstract

Two new species of the deep-water spider crab genus *Pleistacantha* Miers, 1879, are described: *P. griffini* **sp. nov.** and *P. maxima* **sp. nov.** *Pleistacantha griffini*, from northwestern Australia and Indonesia, most closely resembles *P. moseleyi* (Miers, 1886), with which it has been confused. *Pleistacantha griffini* is readily distinguished from *P. moseleyi* based on carapace physiognomy, pereopod morphometrics and gonopod structure. *Pleistacantha maxima*, ranging from Japan to Australia, has been previously confused with the morphologically similar *P. oryx* Ortmann, 1893. The new species differs from *P. oryx* in numerous features, the most striking being a maximum body size exceeding twice that of *P. oryx*.

Key words: Brachyura, Majidae, *Pleistacantha*, new species, spider crab, deep water, Indo-West Pacific

Introduction

Pleistacantha moseleyi (Miers, 1886) and *P. oryx* Ortmann, 1893 are two of the most frequently reported species of the genus. Both have been attributed wide ranges and were long considered conspecific until distinguished by Sakai (1963, 1965) through comparison of the holotype of *P. moseleyi* with Japanese specimens believed to be *P. oryx*. Whilst the separation of *P. oryx* from *P. moseleyi* is well accepted, the identities of the two species remain, paradoxically, ill-defined. The type material of *P. oryx* has neither been figured nor adequately described, and the holotype of *P. moseleyi* is a juvenile female that was only recently redescribed (Guinot & Richer de Forges 1982). Moreover, the majority of studies subsequent to Sakai (1965) treating *P. oryx* and *P. moseleyi* focussed primarily on distinguishing the two forms (e.g., Griffin 1976; Sakai 1976; Griffin & Tranter 1986). Conse-