

Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEW

FAO SPECIES CATALOGUE. VOL. 13. MARINE LOBSTERS OF THE WORLD. An annotated and illustrated catalogue of species of interest to fisheries known to date. L. B. Holthuis, 1991. FAO Fisheries Synopsis No. 125, Volume 13, viii+292 pp. ISBN 92-5-103027-8. Published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome.

Lobsters are one of the most important food crustaceans, and the world harvest is probably some 200 000 tons each year. Many species command very high market prices, and their importance in fisheries is substantial. The present volume by the Food and Agriculture Organisation on the commercial lobsters of the world is probably the most impressive compilation on lobsters ever assembled. The author, one of the foremost carcinologists of the 20th century and its leading lobster expert, has certainly done an excellent job putting the book together.

The present book deals with three infraorders (Astacidea, Palinuridea, Thalassinidea), 10 families (Thaumastochelidae, Nephropidae, Polychelidae, Glypheidae, Palinuridae, Scyllaridae, Synaxidae, Thalassinidae, Upogebiidae, Callianassidae), 33 genera and 149 species. Although

the book is supposed to deal mainly with fishery species, Holthuis has also included many systematically interesting taxa of no immediate or only peripheral fishery importance (e.g. the Glypheidae). As such, the usefulness of the book, especially for carcinologists not working on fishery-related aspects, is greatly enhanced.

Keys have been provided for all families and genera, and most of the species, especially of the important or smaller genera. All the species in the commercially important genera *Homarus*, *Palinurus*, *Panulirus*, *Jasus* are identified. Only in the large genus *Scyllarus* (with more than 40 nominal species), in which most of the members are too small to be of fishery importance, is the treatment rather curt. Even then, the distributions and synonyms of all the taxa are included, and seven species are treated in detail. The crisp figures are very diagnostic, and the key characters are indicated on the drawings to help in their identification. Distribution maps are provided for all the species treated. The layout of the text will prove useful both for fishermen, fishery officials, as well as scientists and laymen. The primary taxonomic literature is always cited in full, and all synonyms listed. The inclusion of the commercial and/or vernacular names, consolidation of the habitat preferences, provision of data on the biology, ecology, as well as larval biology are very useful.

It would have been nice however, if the Chinese vernacular names of some of the species had been included, especially since Indonesian, Thai and Indonesian names are provided. Many species are much sought after by Southeast Asian and mainland Chinese, especially gourmets, and command very high prices. For example, *Panulirus* spp. are called "Loong Sia" (Dragon Prawn), *Thenus orientalis* is "Sia Pwok" (Thin Prawn) and *Paribaccus antarcticus* is "Pee-Pa Sia" (Guitar Prawn).

In Singapore and Malaysia, the most important spiny lobster is *Panulirus polyphagus*, and is the main species seen in markets and restaurants. Large numbers of this lobsters are maintained live in restaurant aquaria as fresh seafood commands much higher prices. Coral reef species like *P. versicolor*, *P. ornatus* or *P. homarus* are rarely offered in markets, although all three (especially *P. ornatus* and *P. versicolor*) are relatively common in the reefs. Interestingly, small specimens of *P. versicolor* are frequently sold for the marine aquarium trade. The main flathead or slipper lobster caught for food is *Thenus orientalis*, and although it commands much lower prices compared to *Panulirus*, is nevertheless sold in large numbers.

From Southeast Asia only the following species of Palinuridea are known: *Palinurus homarus*, *P. longipes*, *P. ornatus*, *P. penicillatus*, *P. polyphagus*, *P. stimpsoni*, *P. versicolor*, *Puerulus angulatus*, *P. velutinus*, *Palinurellus wieneckii*, *Thenus orientalis*, *Scyllarides haanii*, *S. squamosus*, *S. tridacnophaga*, *Ibacus brevipes*, *I. ciliatus*, *Parribaccus antarcticus*, *Scyllarus aureus*, *S. aurora*, *S. batei*, *S. bertholdii*, *S. demani*, *S. martensi*, *S. ornatus*, *S. rugosus*, *S. sordidus* and *S. timidus*. Recently, *Linuparus somniosus* also been obtained from the Straits of Malacca near Thailand (unpublished data).

From the taxonomic perspective, a new subgenus, *Sagmarius*, is established under *Jasus* for the large New Zealand and south Australian rock lobster *Palinurus verreauxi* H. Milne Edwards, 1851. The name for the ghost shrimp *Callinasa affinis* Holmes, 1900, is shown to be a junior primary homonym of *C. affinis* A. Milne Edwards, 1860, and is replaced by a new name, *C. biffari*.

In summary, the format and scope of Holthuis' book will prove very useful to all carcinologists and ecologists in general, not just those associated with fisheries. There can be no doubt that this book will be the most important one on lobsters for a long time to come.

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BOOK REVIEW

A GUIDE TO PENAEOID SHRIMPS FOUND IN THAI WATERS. Somnuk Chaitiamvong & Mala Supongpan. 1992. 77 pp. ISBN 0-642-17572-1. Published by the Australian Institute of Marine Science, Townsville, Australia.

Penaeoid prawns are probably the most important of all the crustaceans harvested from the waters of Southeast Asia for food, but the identification of the many species obtained by fishermen has never been an easy task. Hall (1961, 1962) published two very important papers on Malayan penaeid prawns, as did Johnson (1976), and despite the many advances which have occurred since then, no one has prepared a guide to the Southeast Asian penaeoid fauna. Holthuis' (1980) important synopsis of the shrimps and prawns of the world of fishery value, because of its scope, deals only with the more important species only, and does not have illustrations.

It is thus obvious that for animals of such economic importance, an effective means to their identification is needed. While guides to the valuable penaeid fauna of other parts of the world (e.g. Australia) have recently been produced (e.g. Grey *et al.*, 1983), the lack of such guides for Southeast Asia is an unfortunate situation. Certainly, there has never been a good guide to the penaeoid prawns of Thailand. Chaitiamvong & Supongpan's book thus fills a much needed hiatus in Southeast Asian carcinology.

The book deals with three families, Solenoceridae (six genera), Penaeidae (seven genera) and Sicyoniidae (one genus), and a total of 56 species are treated. All are illustrated with line drawings or colour photographs. The 56 colour plates of the species are welcomed, especially since many of them are of fresh animals with their natural colours. It is also very heartening to see that all the specimens illustrated have accompanying data pertaining to their collection site, date of collection etc. The seemingly "unimportant" omission of this information in many guide