

PANULIRUS POLYPHAGUS— A NEW SPINY LOBSTER RECORD FROM PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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ABSTRACT

A female spiny lobster taken in the Gulf of Papua and identified as Panulirus polyphagus (Herbst, 1793), is described and illustrated as a new record for Papua New Guinea.

INTRODUCTION

COMMERCIAL exploitation of spiny lobster resources in Papua New Guinea has evolved around one species, the 'ornate spiny lobster' or *Panulirus ornatus* Fabricius. Four other species, viz., *P. versicolor* Latreille, *P. penicillatus* (Olivier), *P. homarus* Latreille, and *P. longipes femoristriga* (Von Martens), are also known to occur in Papua New Guinea waters (Pyne 1970; Rapson 1962).

A privately operated commercial prawn trawler, the M.V. *Claire M*, fishing in Freshwater Bay, Gulf of Papua, took from the trawl catch a different species of spiny lobster, later identified by the author as *Panulirus polyphagus* (Herbst, 1793).

MATERIAL

One adult female of 244.3 mm total length, carapace length 85.2 mm, weight 292.2 g (see Plate) was taken at a depth of 13 metres by the prawn trawler M.V. *Claire M* on 23rd September, 1970, in Freshwater Bay (Lat. 8°10' S., Long. 146° E.).

DESCRIPTION

The antennular plate has two principal spines only, set well forward, the remainder of the plate being unarmed and smooth; colour is blue-green with a cream median longitudinal stripe. Antennular flagella have alternate bands of reddish-brown and cream.

Cephalothorax is divided into an anterior hepatic region with few spines and posterior branchio-cardiac region with many spines and

tufted setae. Cervical groove is deep and smooth; hepatic groove shallow and smooth; cardiac and branchial grooves shallow with numerous tufted setae. Hepatic region blue-green in colour, has spines with a green-brown base and cream tip. The tufted setae, reddish-brown in colour, obscure the blue-green colour of the branchio-cardiac region.

The specimen has a row of six cream spots on each side of the lateral regions of the carapace, the anterior spot being the largest; a small spine arises from each spot. From the posterolateral corner of the carapace to the region of the mouth parts runs a white stripe, terminating in a broad white patch. Another white stripe commences at the same place, running along the base of the legs. Walking legs are patched; joints cream with remainder cream, green or brown patches.

Each abdominal somite is smooth, with a black transverse band on the hind margin, and a narrow horizontal cream stripe which is broken on the first abdominal somite. Colour is blue-green pitted with cream spots.

Anterior third of telson and uropods are blue-green in colour with pitted white spots; remainder is reddish-brown.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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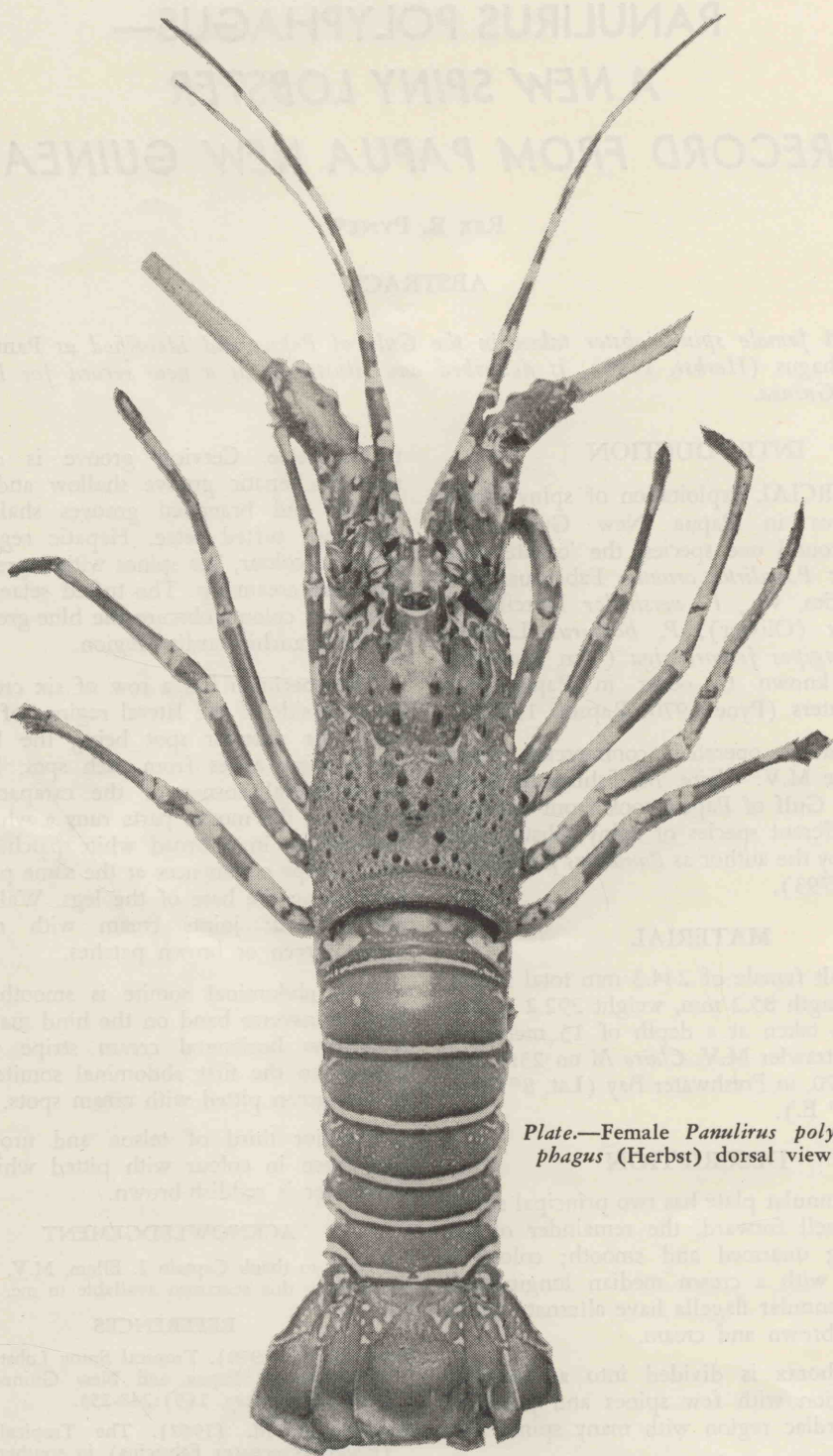


Plate.—Female *Panulirus polyphagus* (Herbst) dorsal view