

First occurrence of two crab species, *Actaea calculosa* (Milne Edwards, 1834) and *Atergatis integerrimus* (Lamarck, 1801), family Xanthidae in Iraqi coast waters

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ABSTRACT

The crab *Actaea calculosa* (Edwards, 1834), belonging to family Xanthidae (Macleay, 1838) has been recorded in many coastal waters worldwide. In the shallow waters of the southern side of the Persian-Arab Gulf, another crab species, *Atergatis integerrimus* (Lamarck, 1801), of the same family was detected. Those two crab species were addressed in the current study. During the study period (12 January - 19 June 2019), crab specimens were collected from Al-Faw city at the intertidal and subtidal zones in the southern part of Shatt Al-Arab Estuary. Diagnostic features of both species were reported. The description of the latter species is close to that of *A. roseus* from the coastal waters of India and the Red sea, while it remarkably differs in the anterolateral margin shape of the carapace. The study aimed to increase the knowledge of the diversity of the marine fauna in the Iraqi coast waters, filling the gap in the data documented. In addition, this work would enhance our understanding of the fauna of this area and define the diversity and the distribution of these species and other crab species along the subtidal zone of the Iraqi coast waters.

INTRODUCTION

Species of Brachyuran crab belongs to Xanthidae family; they usually inhabit the rocky equatorial shores (Ng *et al.*, 2008). This family is the most common in the Persian-Arabian Gulf. Previously, 22 species of Xanthidae were listed, five of which were recorded for the first time in the region (Apel, 2001). Various studies have been conducted on the taxonomy of the crabs in the coastal water of Iraq (Al-Maliky *et al.*, 2016; Al-khafaji *et al.*, 2017a, b, c, d; Al-Khafaji *et al.*, 2019; Yasser *et al.*, 2020). The genus *Actaea* of Xanthid, commonly related to equatorial coral reefs, was studied and represented by 31 species (Ng *et al.*, 2008; Guinot & Low, 2010; Mendoza *et al.*, 2012; Ghotbeddin & Naserloo, 2014; Abdelsater *et al.*, 2015; Ng & Bouchet, 2015). specimens of *Actaea calculosa* were neither found nor recorded in previous studies related to other areas of the Persian-Arabian gulf coasts. Nevertheless, other species of genus *Actaea* were reported. Unfortunately, there is limited information about other