

## A rare record of *Hyastenus hilgendorfi* de Man, 1887 (Crustacea: Decapoda: Majidae) from the Levant

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### Abstract

The majid crab *Hyastenus hilgendorfi* is one of the rarest Erythrean alien decapod species in the Mediterranean, with just two records off the Israeli coast in 1960 and 1977. On 21 September, 2004 it was collected again from the central Mediterranean coast of Israel.

Key words: *Hyastenus hilgendorfi*, Decapoda, Majidae, Mediterranean, Red Sea, alien

On 21 September, 2004, benthic surveys off the central Mediterranean coast of Israel (31°55.31'N, 34°42.3'E) conducted aboard the RV Shikmona collected a male specimen of *Hyastenus hilgendorfi* de Man, 1887 (Figure 1) at depth of 8.5-9.5 m. The adult specimen (carapace length (CL) 14.8 mm, total length (TL) 20.2 mm) is deposited in the National Collections, Tel Aviv University (TAU AR 27815).

*Hyastenus hilgendorfi* is distributed in the Indo-West Pacific region, from the Red Sea to the Malay Archipelago (Holthuis 1956). The species was widely collected from the central and southern parts of the Suez Canal already in 1924 (Kantara, El Ferdan, El Guisr, Great Bitter Lake, and Port Taufiq) (Calman 1927), and later also from Lake Timsah (Gravel 1936, Monod 1938), and at Port Said (km 4-5), at the Mediterranean terminal of the canal (Monod 1938). A single immature female specimen (CL 13 mm) was collected off the central Israeli coast in 1960 (Lewinsohn and Holthuis 1964). An examination of the decapod holdings of the National Collections, prompted by the recent finding,



Figure 1. *Hyastenus hilgendorfi* de Man, 1887, male, 20.2 mm, Israel, Mediterranean Sea (TAU AR 27815), dorsal view (photo by A. Shoob)

unearthed an unpublished record, collected by the author, off the central Mediterranean coast of Israel, i.e. a single male specimen (CL 13.8 mm, TL 18.8 mm), was collected off Palmahim (31°55'N, 34°40'E), at depth of 18 m, on 23 January 1977, by the author (TAU AR 16282).

Since the likelihood of encountering a stray incursion from the Red Sea in the Mediterranean is minuscule, most recorded alien species are considered as 'established' species that have self-sustaining populations of some duration. However, a single record dating back several decades may be considered an ephemeral entry. The succession of records thus suggests that a small population may exist in the southeastern Mediterranean Sea.

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