

Polynesian grapsid crab

Phylum	Arthropoda
Subphylum	Crustacea
Class	Malacostraca
Order	Decapoda
Infraorder	Brachyura
Family	Grapsidae

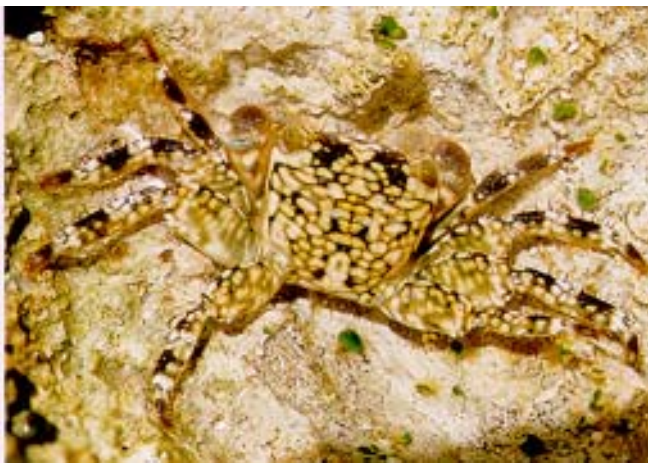


Photo by P. Ng

DESCRIPTION

Medium-sized crab, to about 5 cm carapace width. Carapace almost square (9/10 as long as wide), with its whole surface crossed by prominent, granulated lines, fringed by hairs lying flat on the carapace. Middle pair of suprafrontal lobes very prominent and elongate, separated from each other and from the lateral lobes by broad, deep, hairy furrows.

Rathbun (1907) notes that this species is near *P. plicatus* (a native Hawaiian species, pictured below), but is distinguished by its parallel sides, coarse striation, and great hairiness.



A similar, but native, grapsid crab, *Pachygrapsus plicatus* (photo J. Hoover).

HABITAT

Intertidal, on rocky shores.

DISTRIBUTION

HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

Only known from leeward harbors on Oahu

PRESENT DISTRIBUTION

French Polynesia, Japan, and Hawaii

NATIVE RANGE

French Polynesia

MECHANISM OF INTRODUCTION

Unintentional, perhaps as larvae in ballast water.

IMPACT

Ecological impact unstudied, but probably competes with native intertidal grapsid crabs for food and shelter.

ECOLOGY

Feeding

This crab is a scavenger, feeding on plant and animal debris in the intertidal zone.

Reproduction

With separate sexes. Fertilization is external, with planktonic larval stage.

REMARKS

This rocky intertidal crab, previously known from French Polynesia (the type locality is Tuamotu) and Japan, was collected in 1996 from Barbers Point Harbor (Davie, 1998). Peter Ng (pers. comm.) found it to be common at Kewalo, Oahu, in February 2000. Sakai (1976) notes the habitat as “coral reef, at high tidal mark”, but in Hawaii, so far it seems to be restricted to harbors and adjacent areas. We regard it as introduced by ballast water.

REFERENCES

- Davie, P. 1998. New records of crabs in Hawaii (Crustacea: Decapoda: Brachyura). Bishop Mus. Occ. Pap. 56: 63-64.
- Sakai, T. 1976. Crabs of Japan and adjacent seas. Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo. 773 pp.
- Rathbun, M.J. 1907. The Brachyura. Mem. Mus. Comp. Zool. 35(2): 21-74.