

# Family Penaeidae from the Mediterranean Waters of Egypt

by

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During a recent survey of the Crustacean decapods in the Egyptian Mediterranean waters, 9 species belonging to the Family *Penaeidae* have been identified. 5 of them are Red Sea immigrants through the Suez Canal and are widely distributed in the Indo-West Pacific regions : *Penaeus japonicus* Bate, *P. semi-sulcatus* De Haan, *Metapenaeus monoceros*, *M. stebbingi* Nobili and *Trachypenaeus curvirostris* (Stimpson). Commercial exploitation of the Mediterranean populations of these species is, as yet, more or less confined to the eastern basin particularly the south eastern regions. On the other hand, *Penaeus kerathurus* Forskål, *Parapenaeus longirostris* Lucas, *Sicyonia carinata* (Brünnich) and *Solenocera membranaceum* (Risso) are widely distributed in the Mediterranean Sea and the east Atlantic. The record of *S. membranaceum* is new to Egypt.

Commercial shrimp fishing in the South Eastern Mediterranean waters is based solely on species of the *Penaeinae*. The greater part of the catch is formed by the Indopacific immigrants, of which *M. monoceros* is the leading species.

In the last few years, particularly after the cessation of Nile flood water discharge into the Mediterranean Sea (since 1966), the total shrimp catch has been greatly declined. For instance, the shrimp catch in 1970 (830 tons) was almost 1/10 that of 1963 (8500 tons). The possible causes of this condition are briefly discussed.

