

***Potamonautes (Platypotamonautes) ecorseii* (Marchand, 1902) (Decapoda, Potamonautidae) new to Ghana and northern Nigeria**

N. CUMBERLIDGE *Department of Biological Sciences, Bayero University, PMB 3011, Kano, Nigeria, West Africa*

Summary

The West African river crab, *Potamonautes (Platypotamonautes) ecorseii* (Marchand, 1902) is reported to occur for the first time in Ghana and for only the second time in Nigeria. Its geographical range is extended south to include the Volta river basin in Ghana, and east to northwest Nigeria, a distance of some 1200 km.

Résumé

On rapporte que le crabe de rivière d'Afrique de l'Ouest, *Potamonautes (Platypotamonautes) ecorseii* (Marchand, 1902) est apparu pour la première fois au Ghana et pour la deuxième fois seulement au Nigeria. Sa distribution géographique s'étend donc vers le sud pour inclure le bassin du fleuve Volta au Ghana et vers l'est jusqu'au N-O du Nigeria, soit une distance d'environ 1200 km.

Introduction

This note arises from a recent examination of the collection of potamonautid crabs held in the British Museum (Natural History), London. Eight previously-undetermined specimens of *Potamonautes (Platypotamonautes) ecorseii* (Marchand, 1902) were identified from three new localities in West Africa. This is of interest because this is the first record of *P.(P.) ecorseii* in Ghana and only the second record of it in Nigeria (Voelker & Sachs, 1977). These new records represent a considerable range extension for this species.

The geographical distribution of *P.(P.) ecorseii* is summarized in Table 1. It is predominantly found in the rivers which flow through the savanna regions of West Africa, from Mauritania to Cameroun. The largest number of specimens found so far have been from localities in the internal delta of the river Niger in Mali, from Bamako to Timbuktu (Marchand, 1902; Rathbun, 1904; Roux, 1935; Monod, 1977), or in the neighbouring upper Gambia river basin in Senegal and Guinea (Monod, 1969; 1977). Its occurrence in Mauritania (Monod, 1977) presumably marks the northern and western boundaries of its distribution.

The two new localities in Ghana reported here are both in the Volta river basin and extend its range south from previously-known localities in this river basin in Upper Volta (Roux, 1935; Bott, 1959) and northern Togo (Balss, 1936). The presence of *P.(P.) ecorseii* in the river Sokoto-Rima in north-west Nigeria (which is a tributary of the Niger) represents an important range extension of

Table 1. The distribution of *Potamonautes (Platypotamonautes) ecorseii*

Country	Locality	Record
Mauritania	Guidemaka Fada-Njourmu	Monod (1977) Monod (1977)
Senegal	Parc National de Nikolo-Koba (five localities)	Monod (1969; 1977)
Guinea	Youkounkoun	Monod (1977)
Mali	Lake Télé, near to Goundam, west of Timbuktu. (TYPE) Lake Débo, Gourao Marsh near Bamako Machina Kona River Niger between Timbuktu and Say (' <i>Potamon nigrensis</i> ') River Niger near Mopti	Marchand (1902) Monod (1977) Monod (1977) Monod (1977) Monod (1977) Rathbun (1904) MNHN, Paris
Ivory Coast	Ferkessé Letrabou Yapo	Roux (1935) Roux (1935) Bott (1959)
Ghana	River Kamba (tributary of the River Volta) northern territory, Gold Coast (= Ghana) Locality unrecorded	BM(NH), London BM(NH), London
Upper Volta	Bantoura	Roux (1935, Bott (1959)
Togo	River Ege (' <i>Potamon nigrensis</i> ')	Balss (1936)
Nigeria	Amachi, Cross River State Sokoto-Rima flood plain, Sokoto State	Voelker & Sachs (1977) BM(NH), London
Cameroun	Mobu (= 'Mbouda'), Bamenda highlands	Balss (1936)

MNHN = Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris; BM(NH) = British Museum (Natural History), London.

some 1200 km eastwards along the Niger. I have made extensive collections of the potamonautids of the savanna region in Nigeria east of this site, and *P.(P.) ecorseii* would appear to be absent from the Hadejia river/Lake Chad basin. There are fewer records of the occurrence of *P.(P.) ecorseii* in the forest region of West Africa, these being in southern Ivory Coast (Roux, 1935; Bott, 1959; Monod, 1977), south-east Nigeria (Voelker & Sachs, 1977) and south-west Cameroun (Balss, 1936). *P.(P.) ecorseii* is not found in the forest regions of Liberia, Sierra Leone, southern Guinea, Guinea Bissau, southern Senegal and Gambia.

The new localities for *P.(P.) ecorseii* reported here indicate that this species is more widespread in West Africa than was previously thought. Further collections of the river crabs of this region are still needed since it is likely that many of the gaps in our knowledge of its distribution are simply the result of inadequate collections.

Material examined

- (i) Three specimens, all adult females. River Kamba, tributary of the river Volta northern territory, Gold Coast (= Ghana). All previously undetermined. BM(NH), London. 11.6.1948.
- (ii) Four specimens, three adult males, one juvenile. Locality unrecorded, Gold Coast (= Ghana). All previously undetermined. BM(NH), London.
- (iii) One specimen, adult male. Sokoto-Rima flood plain, northern Nigeria. Previously undetermined. BM(NH), London.

Acknowledgments

Dr R. Ingle of the British Museum (Natural History), London is thanked for his most helpful assistance during my visit to the museum.

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(Manuscript received 15 June 1984)