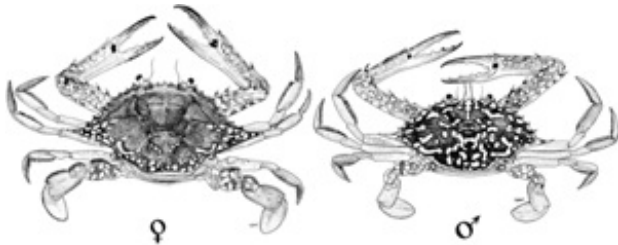




Species Fact Sheets

Portunus pelagicus (Linnaeus, 1758)



Portunus pelagicus: (click for more)



Portunus pelagicus: (click for more)

Synonyms

- *Cancer pelagicus* Linnaeus, 1758, (original description).
- *Neptunus pelagicus* A. Milne-Edwards, 1861
- *Lupa pelagica* H. Milne-Edwards, 1834
- *Portunus pelagicus* Rathbun, 1902
- *Portunus mauritianus* Ward, 1942
- *Potunus trituberculatus* , (non Miers, 1876) of authors.

FAO Names

En - Blue swimming crab, Fr - Étrille bleue, Sp - Jaiba azul.

3Alpha Code: SCD Taxonomic Code: 2311100401

Diagnostic Features

Carapace rough to granulose with regions discernible; front with 4 acutely triangular teeth; 9 teeth on each anterolateral margin. The most external tooth is 2 to 4 times larger than the precedent. Chelae elongate (more in males than in females) with conical tooth at the base of fingers; 3 spines on the inner margin of the merus. Legs laterally flattened to varying degrees, last 2 segments of last pair paddle-like. Males coloured with blue markings, females dull green.

Geographical Distribution



Launch the Aquatic Species Distribution map viewer

Troughout the Indic and West Pacific Oceans: From Japan, and Philippines troughout Southeast and East Asia, to Indonesia, the East of Australia, and Fidji Islands, and westward to the Red Sea and East Africa. *P. pelagicus* occurs also in the Mediterranean Sea as lessepsian species along the coast of Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Turkey, the Syrian Arab Republic, Cyprus and the east southern coast of Sicily.

Habitat and Biology

Sandy and sand-muddy depths in shallow waters between 10 to 50 m depth, including areas near reefs, mangroves, seagrass and algal beds. Juveniles most commonly occurring in intertidal shallower areas. Age of maturity around 1 year. Feeding on a wide variety of sessile and slow moving benthic invertebrates (hermit crabs, gastropods, bivalves, ophiuroids, and gammarid amphipods). Almost exclusively carnivorous, rarely consuming plant material.

Size

Maximum carapace width 20 cm (males). Common size in male: 140 mm cw (64 mm carapace length).

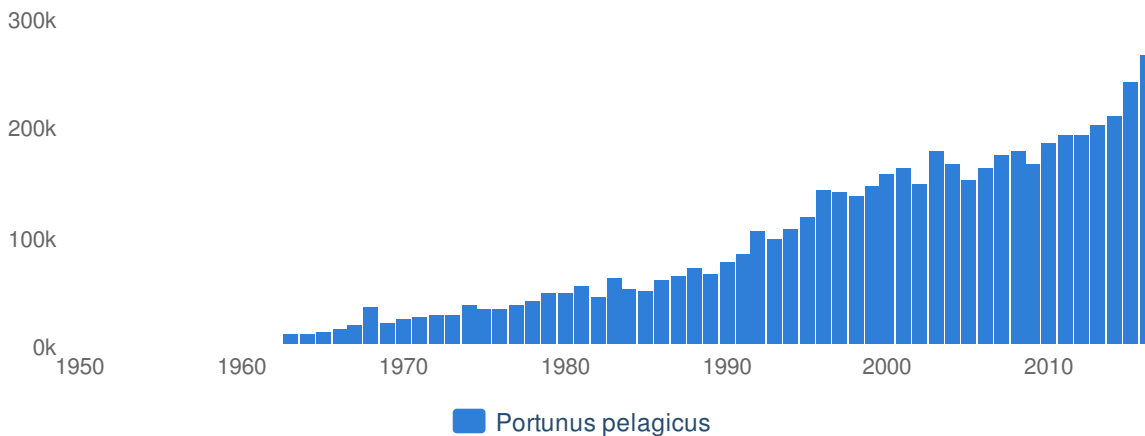
Interest to Fisheries

Mainly collected by artisanal traps, trawls, beach seines, cylindrical wire traps, folding traps, pots, hop nets, drop nets and crab gill nets. The total catch reported for this species to FAO for 1999 was 133 938 t. The countries with the largest catches were China (52 577 t) and Philippines (34 076 t).

For sale in local markets (frozen or fresh) and for the crab-flesh canning industry. It attains lower prices than *Scylla* although crabs of *Portunus* are taken in larger quantities.

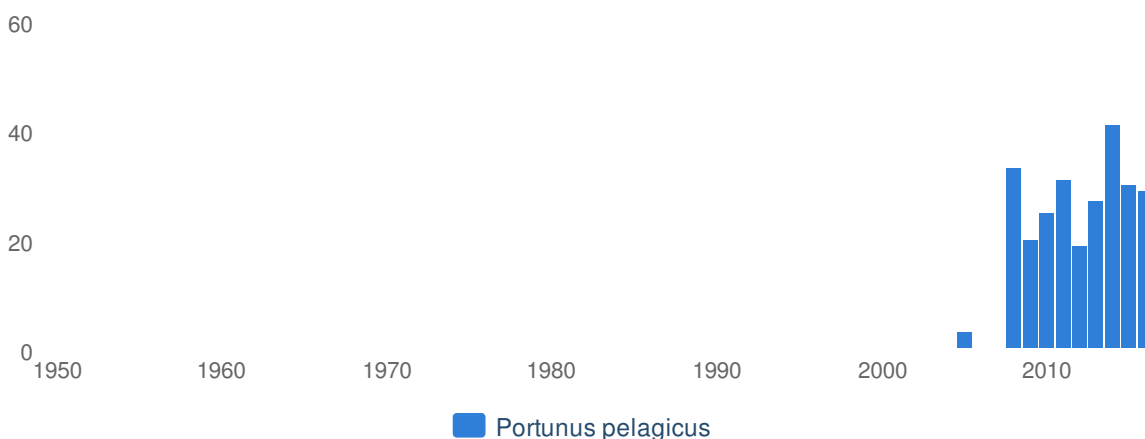
Global Capture Production for species (tonnes)

Source: FAO FishStat



Global Aquaculture Production for species (tonnes)

Source: FAO FishStat



Remarks

The species is similar to *Portunus trituberculatus* in its general appearance. *P. trituberculatus* resembles a large stocky female of *P. pelagicus*. *P. pelagicus* is, however, easily distinguished because it has 4 frontal teeth (3 in *P. trituberculatus*) and it has 3 spines in the merus of chelipeds (4 in *P. trituberculatus*). *Portunus sanguinolentus* (Herbst, 1783) inhabit the same area but it is easily distinguished by their 3 prominent maroon to red spots on posterior 1/3 of carapace.

Bibliography

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