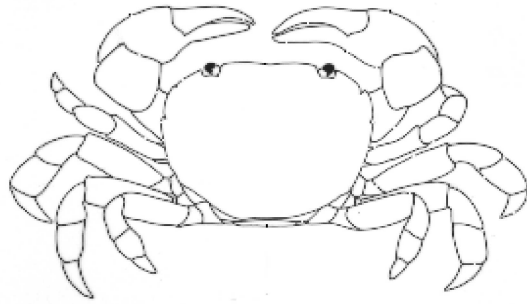


A field guide to Kenyan mangroves



Merguia oligodon (De Man, 1888)

Family: Hippolytidae



Zone: This semi-terrestrial shrimp inhabits the *A. marina* landward zone to *R. mucronata* zone in both fringe and riverine mangroves (Gillikin et al., 2001).

Habitat: In and around trees, under bark, climbs trunks and pneumatophores, [N. smithi](#) burrows (Vannini & Oluoch, 1993; Gillikin et al., 2001).

Food: They graze the algal carpets blanketing mangrove roots (Vannini & Oluoch, 1993) and eat crab feces (Gillikin et al., 2001).

Ecological notes: The shrimp remain out of water at high tide, and during the day retreat into suitable hiding places; they are strictly

nocturnal (Vannini & Oluoch, 1993). They have strongly reflective eyes, which make them easy to spot at night with a torch. They occur in high densities in Kenyan mangrove and inhabit *N. smithi* burrows (Gillikin et al., 2001).

Distinguishing characteristics: Similar to *Merguia rhizophorae* (Rathbun, 1900), but are conspicuously larger; carapace length from 5.6 to 7.8 mm; corneal diameter is about 0.22 of the carapace length; ova have a length of about 1.0 mm (Bruce, 1993).

Geographical range: Have been found in the Malay Archipelago and surrounding areas (Kemp, 1914; Holthuis, 1947, 1958) and Mida Creek and Gazi Bay, Kenya (Bruce, 1993; Vannini & Oluoch, 1993; Gillikin et al., 2001).

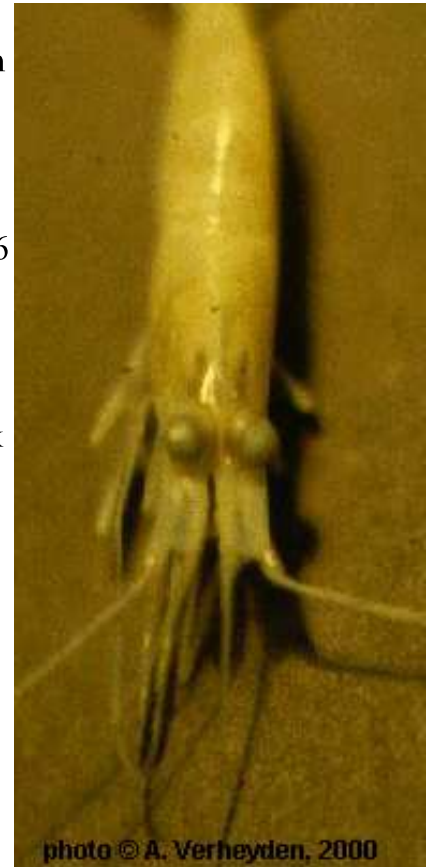


photo © A. Verheyden, 2000



photo © A. Verheyden

References:

Bruce, A.J., 1993. The occurrence of the semi-terrestrial shrimp *Merguia oligodon* (De Man 1888) and *M. rhizophorae* (Rathbun 1900) (Crustacea Decapoda Hippolytidae) in Africa. *Tropical Zoology*, 6: 179-187.

Gillikin, D.P., S. De Grave and J.F. Tack, 2001. The occurrence of the semi-terrestrial shrimp *Merguia oligodon* (De Man, 1888) in *Neosarmatium smithi* H. Milne Edwards, 1853 burrows in Kenyan mangroves. *Crustaceana* 74(5): 505-508. ([REPRINT](#))

Holthuis, L.B., 1947. The decapods of the Siboga Expedition, Part IX. The Hippolytidae and Rhynchocinetidae collected by the Siboga and Snellius Expeditions with remarks on other species. Siboga Expedition Monogr., 39(a8): 1-100.

Holthuis, L.B., 1958. Contributions to New Guinea carcinology. II. On *Merguia oligodon* (De Man). Nova Guinea, (new ser.) 9(2): 231-234. Kemp, S., 1914. Notes on Crustacea Decapoda in the Indian Museum. V. Hippolytidae. Records of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, 10: 81-129.

Vannini, M. & A. Oluoch, 1993. Notes on *Merguia oligodon* (De Man 1888) the Indo-Pacific semi-terrestrial shrimp (Hippolytidae Natantia). Tropical Zoology, 6: 281-286.

[See more mangrove books](#)

[home](#)



all text and photographs copyright© 2001 [David Gillikin](#) and [Anouk Verheyden](#)

Created 05 January 2000

<http://www.mangrovecrabs.com>