

An annotated identification guide of economically important marine prawn species in Sarawak waters

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ABSTRACT

Due to their economic value, the prawns are susceptible to overfishing of their natural resources. Hence, it is imperative to sustain the prawn fishery in Sarawak and Malaysia as a whole, an appropriate and effective management plan be developed. In order to ensure sustainable management and conservation of the species, the identification of the prawn species is a necessary first step. This study was to provide a comprehensive reference for the identification of economically important marine prawn species found in Sarawak waters. Between 2021 and 2023, samples were collected from the landing sites in Sarawak by trawl nets, trammel nets and bag nets. Annotated descriptions were documented, high-quality images were photographed and taxonomic keys and illustrations of the most helpful morphological traits for identification were highlighted to facilitate accurate species identification. Overall, 20 species belonging to 8 genera within the Superfamily Penaeoidea were identified. Among these, the genus *Penaeus* exhibits the highest diversity with 6 species, followed by *Metapenaeus* (5 species), *Mierspenaeopsis* (2 species), *Metapenaeopsis* (2 species), and one species each from the genus *Parapenaeopsis*, *Alcockpenaeopsis*, *Solenocera*, *Kishinouyepenaeopsis* and *Trachysalambria* respectively.

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