

# Distribution and Morphological Characteristics of Larval Stages of *Portunus pelagicus* and *Thalamita prynna* (Brachyura; Portunidae) Collected from Coastal Waters of Khuzestan Province (North of Persian Gulf)

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## Abstract

This is an attempt to study the larval stages of Portunidae from the Iranian coastal waters. Samples were collected monthly with a 300 µm aperture net from the coastal waters of Khuzestan (North of the Persian Gulf) from May 2007 to April 2008. The larval stages are illustrated and described in detail for *Portunus pelagicus* and *Thalamita prynna*. Spatial and temporal variations in density of larval stages of 2 species of Portunidae were calculated. *Portunus pelagicus* and *Thalamita prynna* were the dominant species with the maximum abundance of 63.3 and 94.3 individual /m<sup>3</sup> respectively, in May 2007.

As the study area has the subtropical conditions, different species of this family were found from April to November. The composition and abundance of larval stages indicate that Portunid crabs have continuous reproduction strategy with a peak in May.

Keywords: *Zoea*, *Portunidae*, *Zooplankton*, *Khuzestan province*, *Persian Gulf*

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