



## On a new species of the shrimp genus *Athanas* Leach, 1814 (Crustacea, Decapoda, Alpheidae) from Iran\*

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### Abstract

A new species of *Athanas* is described from the Iranian side of the Strait of Hormuz connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman. *Athanas iranicus* n. sp. is the only species in the genus characterised by the presence of dense setal brushes on the dorsolateral margin of the carpus and on most of the palm of the major and minor chelipeds; the presence of an additional setal brush on the dactylus of the major cheliped; a frontal margin with an untypically short rostrum and short, triangular extra-corneal teeth; and mostly concealed eyestalks.

**Key words:** Caridea, Alpheidae, shrimp, *Athanas*, new species, Iran, Strait of Hormuz, Persian Gulf

### Introduction

The alpheid shrimp genus *Athanas* Leach, 1814, as redefined by Anker & Jeng (2007), presently includes 34 species occurring in the eastern Atlantic from Norway south to Angola, and in the Indo-West Pacific from the Red Sea south to South Africa and across the Indian Ocean to Japan, Australia and French Polynesia (Anker & Jeng 2007; Anker & Ahyong 2007). Among these 34 species, at least three have been inadequately described and may represent junior synonyms, whereas four or five others may represent species complexes (Anker 2003; Anker & Jeng 2007). In addition, several undescribed species are known in the genus (Anker & Jeng 2007; A. Anker pers. obs.). All species of *Athanas* are small, inconspicuous shrimps (usually less than 10 mm in total length) inhabiting coral reef crevices, spaces within coral rubble or under rocks, or living commensally, for instance in burrows of other animals (Frogliia & Atkinson 1998; Anker *et al.* 2001) or associated with echinoderms (Banner & Banner 1973; Marin *et al.* 2005; Anker & Marin 2007).

The caridean fauna of the Persian Gulf is generally very insufficiently known, and only two species of *Athanas*, *A. rhothonastes* Banner & Banner, 1960 and *A. parvus* De Man, 1910, have been reported from this area, both from the southern coast of the Gulf (Titgen 1982; De Grave 2007). It is possible that the record of *A. rhothonastes* from the Persian Gulf is a misidentification based on specimen(s) of *A. dimorphus*, which is a common species in the Indian Ocean (Banner & Banner 1981). The northern, Iranian side of the Persian Gulf, appears to be even more undersampled and/or understudied.

In 2008, one of us (RN) collected a single specimen plainly referable to the genus *Athanas* at Qeshm Island, situated just north of the Strait of Hormuz between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, in the Iranian province of Hormozgan. This specimen was examined and identified as an undescribed species from the large, heterogeneous, and possibly non-monophyletic *Athanas dimorphus* Ortmann, 1894 species group