

SPECIES IDENTIFICATION OF THAI RICE-FIELD CRAB IN THE LOWER NORTH-EASTERN REGION OF THAILAND

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Abstract

A stereomicroscope and scanning electron microscopy (SEM) were used to classify Thai rice-field crabs collected from the lower north-eastern region of Thailand. To achieve this, morphological aspects based on the dorsal surface of the carapace and the male first gonopod were investigated. As a result, six species (sp.I, sp.II, sp.III, sp.VII, sp.XII, and sp.XIII) belonging to the genus *Esanthelephusa* could be identified. It was also found that the same crab species could be classified with both the stereomicroscope and SEM, but the latter generally performed better. Therefore, it is suggested that SEM might be used as a new effective tool for the identification of uncertain crab species.

Keywords: Thai rice-field crab, *Esanthelephusa*, identification