

New species of terrestrial crab found climbing on trees in Hong Kong

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A male holotype of the new terrestrial crab species *Haberma tingkok* discovered in Hong Kong. Credit: Dr. Peter K. L. Ng

A new species of terrestrial crab has been found to climb trees on the eastern coast of Hong Kong. All specimens spotted during the survey have been collected at a height of approximately 1.5 - 1.8 m, walking on the bark of the branches at ebbing and low tides. The species is described in the open access journal *ZooKeys*.

Among the crab's characteristic traits are squarish predominantly dark brown carapace, very long legs and orange chelipeds. The species is less

than a centimetre long, with the studied specimens measuring between 8 and 9 millimetres, irrespective of their sex. However, the chelipeds of the males appear stout, while in females they are distinctly more slender.

The scientists who found the [new species](#) (*Haberma tingkok*), Dr. Stefano Cannicci, the Swire Institute of Marine Science at the University of Hong Kong, and Dr. Peter Ng, National University of Singapore, have placed the new species in a small genus, which now contains merely three species. In fact, Dr. Peter Ng has been involved in the discovery of all of them. He also led the team that established the genus 15 years ago, having collected a small previously undescribed species of mangrove crab from Singapore.

The discovery of the tiny crustacean once again proves how little is known about the diversity of these [crabs](#) in Hong Kong. Furthermore, the mangroves that make for the habitat of the new species are under severe impact by both pollution and land reclamation, which underlines the urgent need for their conservation.

Earlier this year, Dr. Peter Ng teamed up with Dr. Jose Christopher Mendoza to [describe](#) another new [species](#) of crab, collected from the rubble at the island of Guam and named after two of the main characters in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter fantasy series.

Provided by Pensoft Publishers

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