

FIDDLER CRAB (OCYPODIDAE : GENUS *UCA*) SIZE, ALLOMETRY AND MALE MAJOR CHELA HANDEDNESS AND MORPHISM ON A THAILAND MANGROVE SHORE.

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ABSTRACT

Measurements of carapace length and breadth of males and females, and of the propodous (manus + pollex) and dactyl lengths of the major chela of the males of the four most abundant species of fiddler crabs, *Uca forcipata*, *U. urvillei*, *U. vocans* and *U. lactea*, inhabiting a mangrove shore on Phuket Island, western peninsular Thailand are given. Size comparisons of these morphological characters clearly illustrate allometry that is characteristic of all *Uca* species. Larger *U. vocans* and *U. lactea* males were mostly found in the upper limits of their intertidal range where they would have more time for display during low water.

Relative frequencies of left and right handedness differed among the species. No significant differences were found in the handedness of brachychelous, leptochelous or intermediate (*U. vocans* only) morphs. Brachychelous morphs were significantly more numerous than either of the other morphs.

Sex ratios varied with size class, males in general being more numerous in all shared classes, and in total two to three times more abundant than females. Differences may be related to differential migration, mortality and growth rates.

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