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Horton H. Hobbs

William H. Massman
Virginia Fisheries Laboratory

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The River Shrimp, *Macrobrachium ohione* (Smith), in Virginia¹

HORTON H. HOBBS, JR. AND WILLIAM H. MASSMANN
University of Virginia and Virginia Fisheries Laboratory

The "river shrimp" belonging to the genus *Macrobrachium*, which range in length from 34 to more than 230 mm., are not to be confused with the smaller "glass shrimp" belonging to the genus *Palaemonetes*, at least one species of which is a common form in the waters of the Piedmont and Coastal Plain of Virginia.

Hedgpeth² has recently summarized and added to the available data on the ecological and geographic distribution of the four species of the genus *Macrobrachium* found in the United States. In this work he includes diagnoses, figures, and a key to the species occurring north of the Rio Grande River.

The range of *Macrobrachium ohione* (Smith), the only endemic member of the genus in North America, and the most widespread form in the United States, was previously known to extend from Avoca, Bertie County, North Carolina (Albemarle Sound) to Aransas Bay, Texas, and northward in the Mississippi drainage system to Illinois and Ohio.

During the course of faunistic studies by the junior author in the tidal portions of the streams emptying into the lower Chesapeake, a single female specimen of *M. ohione* was collected from the James River at Hopewell on April 16, 1952³. The specimen was taken in a one meter hoop net of nylon marquisette (about 25 meshes per inch) which was anchored on the bottom in 15 feet of water where it was left for about 80 minutes.

In more than 2000 samples (including a number made with minnow seines) taken during the spring months, 1949-1952, from brackish water (salinity five parts per thousand) to the head of the tidewaters in the James, Appomattox, Chickahominy, Pamunkey, Mattaponi, and Rappahannock rivers this is the only specimen of *Macrobrachium* taken. Since it is known that this species invades salt water it is possible that *M. ohione* frequents most of the streams flowing into the Chesapeake Bay.

Although *M. ohione* is of economic importance in Louisiana as an

¹ Contribution from the Virginia Fisheries Laboratory, No. 40, and the Miller School of Biology.

² Hedgpeth, J. W. (1949) The North American Species of *Macrobrachium* (River Shrimp). Texas Jour. Sci., 1 (3): 23-38, 5 figs.

³ This specimen has been deposited in the collection of the United States National Museum.

item of food, its apparent rarity in Virginia waters would seem to preclude a corresponding value placed on it here. Nonetheless, it should be pointed out that no attempt has been made to trap this shrimp in a manner in which it is taken in numbers elsewhere.