

Crab finds by S'pore-led team now on stamps

SEVEN new species of crabs, discovered by a Singapore-led expedition off the southern Philippines coast, have been immortalised on postage stamps.

In fact, four of them were named by three local researchers from the Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research at the National University of Singapore (NUS).

The museum's director, Associate Professor Peter Ng, led the research effort which more than 60 scientists from around the world participated in.

"We are very proud," he said.

"This shows that sometimes, the value of what we do as scientists can be reflected in something that is of common usage, such as a stamp."

The Stone Crab (*Euryozius camachoi*), is a species he named personally.

"If you are Filipino, it is a piece of your heritage and something to be proud about," he said of the creature, which can be found only in the central Philippines.



Shown here are the red Stone Crab (*Euryozius camachoi*), Stimpson's Intricate Spider Crab (*oxypleurodon stimpsoni*; centre, left) and Spider Crab (*Cyrtomaia ericina*). PHOTO: NUS

The precious finds were dredged from depths of between 100m and 800m in the Bohol and Sulu seas off the island of Panglao, in the southern Philippines.

The area is famed for its rich diversity of species living in diverse environments.

The team discovered about 1,200 different species of crabs and shrimps over four expeditions which began in 2004. Several dozen were new species.

But the global inventory of marine biodiversity is far from complete.

About 1,800 new species are discovered on such trips every year, and around 275,000 have been recorded so far.

"The exercise of science is a continuous journey to increase our knowledge about what is out there on our planet.

"This journey is not only a very fulfilling one, but also fun," said Prof Ng.