

## **Palaeontology of the European freshwater crabs (Brachyura, Potamidae)**

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Freshwater crabs represent one of the most diverse groups of brachyuran crustaceans. In the recent past, they were object of intense research concerning their taxonomy, phylogeny and population biology. In contrast, the freshwater crabs' fossil record remains poorly known, although several studies on freshwater crabs use palaeontological data to approach divergence times or to evaluate hypotheses on their historical biogeography.

To close this gap, we recorded all taxonomic data on the fossil freshwater crabs of the European Neogene and propose a revised taxonomy. We recognise six species of fossil freshwater crabs, that we assign to the genus *Potamon*. Therefore we contradict former assumptions on a relationship with African or Southeast Asian freshwater crabs and argue for these fossil freshwater crabs to belong to the stem-group of the modern European potamids.

Current excavations in the vicinity of Lake Constance (Höwenegg, south Germany) and Graz (Gratkorn, Austria) yielded new specimens and indicate that freshwater crabs occur more frequently in the miocene freshwater deposits of Central Europe than previously thought.