

April 15, 1964

AIR MAIL

Mr. R. Kenny
Department of Zoology
University College of Townsville
North Queensland, Australia

Dear Sir:

Your name and address were given to me by Mr. R. Endean of the University of Queensland as a possible source of information.

I am engaged in the major task of gathering all biologic information on oysters (Ostreidae) that can be utilized in paleontology and geology and can lead to a better understanding of the evolution, speciation, geologic history, distribution, paleoecology and classification of these animals. In short, it is to be a close integration of all neontological and paleontological observations, done from the point of view of a paleontologist, for the purpose of fertilizing both fields. The results so far have been very encouraging and my manuscript is at about the halfway mark and has about 300 type-written pages already.

The particular question that concerns me at the moment is the mode of reproduction of Pycnodonte hyotis (Linné, 1758), which lives on the reefs of the Queensland region. Is it incubatory or not? I am aware that it is reported to have a promyal passage in the exhalant chamber and, therefore, is assumed to be nonincubatory. But do you have any actual observations of its mode of reproduction? Has any one seen it spawn? If not, could I persuade you to look into this matter?

This species is a living fossil--the last of a long line of paleontologic species and genera. Its nature and behavior should be a good clue to those of its ancestors, and the question posed above is fundamental in its nature.

Sincerely yours,

H. B. Stenzel

HBS:cm

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