

February 2, 1967

Mrs. Linda H. Pequegnat
Department of Oceanography
Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas 77843

Dear Mrs. Pequegnat:

Your letter of January 27, 1967, is very interesting. I am astounded that you have found so many oyster species involved.

I believe Galtsoff and Merrill are correct in assuming that O. spreta d'Orbigny is the same species as O. equestris Say. However, I must admit that I have not studied topotype specimens of both names.

My idea is that if two "species" of Ostrea s.s. live side by side in the same environment they would hybridize and distinctions between the two would disappear very soon.

As to claspers on Lopha frons, they are presumably characteristic, although they might be missing on some individuals. There should be additional features distinguishing frons from equestris.

The oyster you call Pycnodonta hyotis is presumably the Pycnodonte thomasi McLean. The generic name is Pycnodonte, not Pycnodonta. Fischer de Waldheim gave that elegant Greek name to the oyster genus and the Pycnodonta is merely a priggish and pedantic latinization perpetrated by one of the Sowerbys. The original name must be used. The P. hyotis is an Indo-Pacific species not to be found on the shores of the Americas. All the Pycnodontes have the vesicular or honeycomb structure; it is a distinctive feature. The hinge of the prodissoconch of Pycnodonte has a continuous series of teeth and sockets, whereas the other oysters have a wide smooth central part separating the two teeth on each end (see Ranson, 1960). Perhaps, you can identify the very young Pycnodonte by the fact that its intestine passes through the pericardium and ventricle of the heart itself, whereas the intestine by-passes both in other oyster genera.

The white stripe on young oysters has been described before by someone (Menzel ? or someone else) as apparently restricted to one species. I have not paid much attention to it.

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Harry and I are collaborating on oyster anatomy and classification. We both can use preserved specimens and would appreciate them. We need the Pycnodonte, in particular.

Please note my new address. Beginning with February 1, I am Visiting Professor here. Can you and your husband come visit me here? A long discussion on oysters would probably help you considerably. I have an enormous amount of notes and a long manuscript in preparation and always welcome discussions on oysters. My library, notes, manuscripts, etc. are in transit now. They should arrive in the next 2 weeks.

Sincerely,

H. B. Stenzel,
Visiting Professor
Department of Geology

HBS/bjc

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