

April 25, 1962

*He gave me a good  
run around*

Dr. John E. Fitch  
State Fisheries Laboratory  
Terminal Island, California

Dear Dr. Fitch:

Dr. Allyn G. Smith of the California Academy of Sciences told me you would probably be able to answer my questions concerning oysters. The reason oysters occupy me very much at present is that Dr. Raymond Moore, the editor, has asked me to write the chapter on Ostreidae for the Bivalve volume of the Treatise on Invertebrate Paleontology. Obviously, good information on living oyster species is very important to the understanding of the extinct species, and I intend to present these data as far as they seem to have a bearing on paleontology.

The question that is before me at this moment is the relations between Ostrea lurida Carpenter and O. conchaphila Carpenter. Are these two distinguishable on color patterns alone or are there other more profound differences? My impression is that the geographic range of one ends where the geographic range of the other begins. Is that correct? Is there a zone of transition (cline) between the two in southern California? What I am really driving at is that it looks to me as if the two are merely geographic subspecies of one polytypic species. One is the less highly colored, northern subspecies and the other the highly colored, southern one. Would you care to write me your opinion of this problem, please?

Sincerely yours,

H. B. Stenzel

HBS:cd

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