

LARGE QUAHOG CLAMS FROM BOCA CIEGA BAY

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ON December 23, 1964, retired Air Force Major J. F. Simon brought to the Marine Laboratory a very large (168 mm, 6½ lb.) southern quahog, *Mercenaria campechiensis* (Gmelin), found just off the intracoastal waterway at Redington Beach, in upper Boca Ciega Bay, Pinellas County, Florida. On December 29 three additional large clams (149.5, 155.5, and 160 mm) were found buried in the substrate about one inch below the surface, with the siphon reaching the surface.

The clams were found on a sand bar across the middle of a small bayou just west of the waterway. At normal low tide the water depth is 2-3 ft, but during spring low tides the bar is reported above water. It is composed of a mixture of sand, mud, and silt and is soft to a depth of about 1 ft, where hard bottom occurs. It is sparingly covered with manatee grass (*Syringodium*) and turtle grass (*Thalassia*). On December 29 the water temperature was 20 C and the salinity 32 o/oo.

It appears that three of these clams constitute new size records for the species. Joseph Rosewater, Associate Curator of Mollusks, U. S. National Museum, states that the largest specimen in the collection measures ca. 153 mm and is the basis of the maximum size record for the species (Abbott, 1954). Porter and Chestnut (1960) list maxima of 5.5 inches (140 mm) and 4 lb. for this species in North Carolina.

LITERATURE CITED

- ABBOTT, R. T. 1954. American seashells. D. Van Nostrand Co., New York, 514 pp.
- PORTER, H. J., AND A. F. CHESTNUT. 1960. The offshore clam industry of North Carolina. Proc. Nat. Shellfish Assn., vol. 51, pp. 67-73.

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