NOTA BREVE

THE GIANT HERMIT CRAB Petrochirus diogenes (LINNAEUS, 1758) (CRUSTACEA: ANOMURA) MAXIMUM SIZE

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The giant hermit crab Petrochirus diogenes (Linnaeus, 1758) is the species that reaches the largest size among the pagurids of the western Atlantic. It is common in mud, sand and around reefs in coastal and oceanic waters. The known distribution range for this species is between Cape Lookout, North Carolina, U.S.A. (Williams, 1984) and Uruguay (Coelho & Ramos-Porto, 1987).

The maximum size of P. diogenes was reported by several authors (Table I) as: total length of carapace (L.c.) 75mm (Provenzano, 1959), 75mm (Williams, 1965); length of the anterior shield 36mm (Williams, 1984), 40mm (Bertini, 1997); carapace 75mm and right cheliped 170 mm (Vergara & Silva, in press). The total length was reported as 304.8 mm (Humann, 1996) and 325mm (Vergara & Silva, Op. Cit.).

Table I - The measurements of the specimen collected in Marataizes, ES, Brazil and the maximum sizes from other authors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gasparini &amp; Vergara &amp; Bertini, Williams, Provenzano</th>
<th>Floeter Silva, in press</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1965; 1964; 1959</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anterior Shield</td>
<td>length: 48.0mm</td>
<td>40mm</td>
<td>36mm</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>width: 48.5mm</td>
<td></td>
<td>34mm</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Carapace</td>
<td>length: 111.3mm</td>
<td>75mm</td>
<td>75mm</td>
<td>75mm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>width: 82.3mm</td>
<td>55mm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Right Cheliped</td>
<td>length: 348.0mm</td>
<td>170mm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Left Cheliped</td>
<td>length: 325.0mm</td>
<td>165mm</td>
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</table>

The P. diogenes specimen (Figure 1) was inhabiting a "giant tun" shell Tonna gelela (Linnaeus, 1758) and was collected in 1987 on a shrimp fishing boat with otter trawl net, 15 to 20 meters deep at Marataizes inner shelf, State of Espírito Santo, Brazil (23° S).

The giant hermit specimen was deposited at the Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paulo - MZUSP 12812 and has the following measurements: anterior shield - length: 48.0mm, width: 48.5mm; carapace - length: 111.3mm, width: 82.3mm; right cheliped - length: 348mm; left cheliped - length: 325mm (Table I). Since we do not have the abdomen (the specimen was dehydrated) we can only deduce the total length of our specimen. Based on the carapace length and width/total body length ratio the total length is estimated to be around 480mm.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to thank Dr. Gustavo Augusto S. de Melo for his kindly comments on the manuscript, checking the measurements and for supplying recent literature; Domingos Afonso Jório for the donation of the specimen and additional information; Dahien Bucher for the helping with the photographic work.

REFERENCES


