

On an Octopod from Placentia Bay, Newfoundland

BY

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(Plate 8)

IN CONTRAST TO THE ABUNDANCE of squid, octopods appear to be rare in Newfoundland waters. On October 28, 1967, a local fisherman obtained an octopod from water 60 fathoms deep, one mile west from Grass Island, Placentia Bay. Due to the rarity of octopods in this area, he brought the specimen to the Marine Sciences Research Laboratory on October 30, where it was turned over to the authors for study. Due to lack of proper treatment, the specimen was damaged and its surface somewhat peeled.

The animal is identified as *Benthoctopus piscatorum* (VERRILL, 1879) (Plate 8, Figure 1). The body is globular; its surface smooth and purplish brown in color. Arms are long and slender, tapering to the tips, and suckers are small. The measurements and indices are given in Table 1.

Benthoctopus piscatorum was first described by VERRILL in 1879 as *Octopus piscatorum*. The present genus was established by GRIMPE in 1921, with *B. piscatorum* as the type species. Specimens from fairly wide distributions, both vertical and horizontal, have been reported, i. e., Le Have Bank, Nova Scotia in 120 fathoms; Grand Bank in 200 fathoms; 39° 26' N, 70° 02' W, in 1362 fathoms (VERRILL, 1880 - 1881); 78° 02' N, 9° 25' E, in 416 fathoms (APPELLÖF, 1893); 66° 41' N, 6° 59' E, in 350

fathoms (APPELLÖF, 1893); 60° 40' N, 4° 50' W, in 563 fathoms (RUSSELL, 1909); 61° 27' N, 1° 47' W, in 681 fathoms (British Museum [quoted from ROBSON, 1932]); 51° 15' N, 11° 47' W, in 707 - 710 fathoms (MASSY, 1907); Faröe Channel in 540 - 608 fathoms (HOYLE, 1886). MUUS (1962) postulated that this species "might be expected" in the waters of Davis Strait west of Greenland. It is the first time that this species has been reported from the inshore waters of Newfoundland.

The specimen is a female, with a very large ovary, measuring 35 by 42 mm (Plate 8, Figure 2). The ovarian egg measures 18 by 6 mm. The spermathecae are globular, black and large, measuring 18 by 10 mm. The values quoted in Table 1 are considerably different from those presented by ROBSON (1932) for *Benthoctopus piscatorum*. The discrepancies are undoubtedly due to the preservation of our specimen.

The rarity of the octopod in Newfoundland waters may only be apparent and further collection by use of proper gear would increase our knowledge of the local octopodan fauna.

We wish to express our appreciation to Dr. G. L. Voss of the Institute of Marine Sciences of the University of Miami for sending us specimens from his collections for purpose of comparison.

Explanation of Plate 8

- Figure 1: *Benthoctopus piscatorum* (VERRILL, 1879), dorsal view of specimen from Placentia Bay, Newfoundland.
Figure 2: Eggs (*in situ*) of described specimen of *Benthoctopus piscatorum* (VERRILL, 1879).

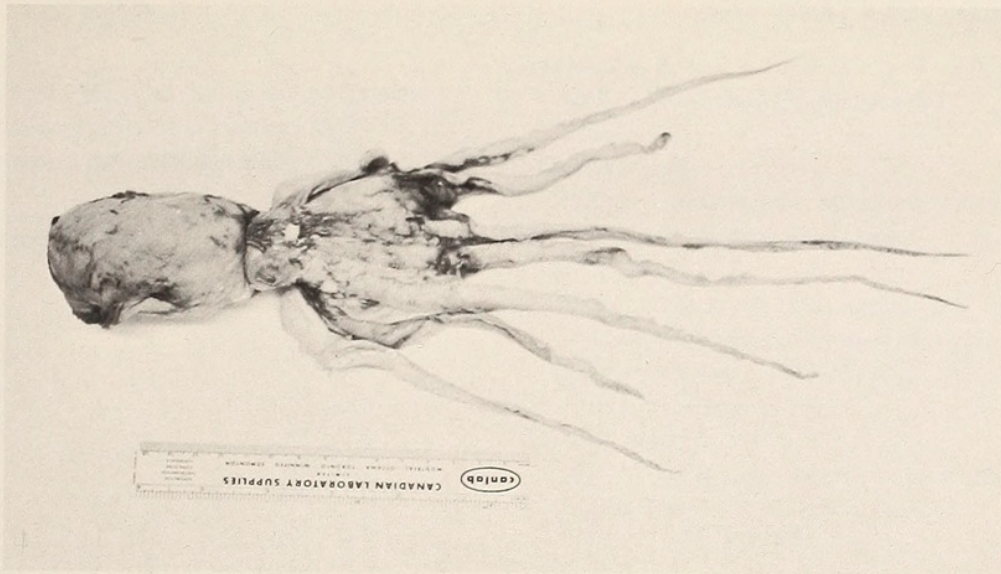


Figure 1



Figure 2



Aldrich, Frederick A and Lu, Chung Cheng. 1968. "On an octopod from Placentia Bay, Newfoundland." *The veliger* 11, 70–71.

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