

This Week's Citation Classic

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Williams A B. Marine decapod crustaceans of the Carolinas.

Fish. Bull. 65:1-298, 1965.

[Univ. North Carolina Inst. Fisheries Research, Morehead City, NC]

The handbook critically reviews current information on 220 species of decapod crustaceans that occur on the continental shelf between Capes Hatteras and Canaveral. Each species is described in a documented, illustrated account giving information on distribution, life history, and ecology. [The SC][®] indicates that this paper has been cited in over 155 publications since 1965.]

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"In the 1950s, marine biological laboratories in the southeastern US were entering a period of expansion and development, but their libraries and reference collections were a far cry from those of today. When I began to study the ecology of penaeid shrimps and other decapod crustaceans at the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill) Institute of Marine Sciences, Morehead City, in 1951, the nearest comprehensive libraries were 180 miles away. I was starved for published information on these crustaceans, knew that colleagues in the region had similar needs, and decided to write a comprehensive manual modeled on that of Hay and Shore¹ that would be readily available to whoever wanted to use it.

"There had long been a center of marine biological research at Beaufort, North Carolina. Studies there had begun in earnest when W.K. Brooks brought students by boat in the summer from Johns Hopkins University during the late-1800s. That work led in

time to development by the University of North Carolina of a tentative summer marine laboratory which evolved into the US Bureau of Fisheries (now the NOAA-NMFS) Laboratory. Duke University Marine Laboratory was fostered in the 1930s by A.S. Pearse, and after World War II, R.E. Coker redeveloped a laboratory for the University of North Carolina in nearby Morehead City. Although teachers and others had compiled lists of the regional marine biota and some manuals for identification, few were in print in the 1950s. There was a need for a new authoritative compilation.

"Since the laboratories were poor in resources, most of the needed reference material was borrowed from regional libraries and the libraries of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution. Basic specimens for the descriptions and illustrations were collected locally, often by colleagues, but many were borrowed from the Charleston Museum, South Carolina (with help from its former curator of crustaceans, G.R. Lutz, Jr.), and from the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, to say nothing of the wealth of distributional information in its archives (with encouragement by Waldo L. Schmitt, and unstinting help from F.A. Chace, Jr.). The needed trips to study in Washington opened up the city's cultural resources for my wife, Jean, and me and sparked a desire that finally brought us here to live.

"The paper has been cited often because it is a documented, comprehensive guide, including thumbnail sketches of what is known about systematics-ecology-biogeography of the species treated. In a way it is too bad that the increased oceanographic effort in the region came in the 1960s, after the manuscript had gone to press, but that may have been good because the manual was a handy reference which aided such work and had application in the region from Cape Hatteras to the Rio Grande and beyond, and to some extent northward to New England. A desire for similar coverage of the colder East Coast north of Cape Hatteras was almost immediately expressed. Now, in response to that, plus the need to keep the original publication current and available, I have completed an expanded and updated version including New England that will appear in a few months."²

1. Hay W P & Shore C A. The decapod crustaceans of Beaufort, N.C., and the surrounding region. *Bull. US Bur. Fish.* 35:369-475, 1918.
2. Williams A B. *Shrimps, lobsters, and crabs of the Atlantic coast of the United States, Maine to northern Florida.* Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press. In press, 1983.