BARNACLES ASSOCIATED WITH MARINE MAMMALS AND SEA TURTLES IN PUERTO RICO AND FLORIDA, USA

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A systematic study of the presence of cirripeds on marine mammals and sea turtles has been carried out in Florida, but not in Puerto Rico. I obtained barnacles collected from stranded whales, manatees and sea turtles in both geographic areas. Barnacles were extracted using forceps and a blade or by hand and were preserved in 70% ethanol. They were dissected with forceps and pliers and the large specimens were cut using a geology saw. Each barnacle was measured and observed with a stereoscope. The measures taken were the diameter, height of the barnacle and the length of its operculum. Those morphometric measures were used to establish a better description of each barnacle species found in our samples. In humpback whales the barnacles species found were Corunula diadema, Corunula regina, and the pedunculate barnacle Conchoderma auritum. On the sea turtles, the species found were Platylepas hexastylus, P. decorata and Stomatolepas dermochelys and over the manatees the species were P. hexastylus, P. decorata, Balanus eburneus, B. amphitrite and a possible Chelonibia manati subspecies in different development stages. Our records and redescriptions increase our knowledge of the cirripeds found in the marine mammals and sea turtles in the island of Puerto Rico and Florida, allow regional comparisons, and simplify identifications in future studies.