OSTRACODE ZONES IN CARIBBEAN MIOCENE

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The term “Caribbean” is used here for a faunal province larger than the present Caribbean region. Woodring (1959) includes in this province the Tampico area of Mexico and the Pacific part of South America as far south as Peru. In this note, the writer has extended the region farther north to include the Gulf Coast region and the Atlantic coastal plain at least as far north as the Carolinas.

Two range-zones of ostracodes can be recognized in the Caribbean, a Procythereis cf. deformis Zone (middle lower-upper middle Miocene) and a Mutilus confragosus Zone (upper Miocene-Recent), separated by an interval in which the two species mentioned are absent. These zones have been found from Trinidad to Florida and from Guatemala to the Dominican Republic, and their occurrence will be documented in the description of the fauna of various areas, to be published elsewhere. However, in view of the extensive surface work and exploration drilling, both past and current, in the Caribbean, which have resulted in increased interest in the correlation of Caribbean Miocene formations, it seems appropriate to introduce these zones now without the descriptive paleontology necessary in the studies of the local fauna.

Only in the last few years did it become apparent, through increased systematic work on the ostracode faunas of the Caribbean, that ostracodes could be used as a stratigraphic tool in the Miocene. Prior to this, the stratigraphic value of ostracodes was not sufficiently realized, because of inadequate and usually widely scattered data. As an example, the Rio Dulce Formation (Miocene, Guatemala) was treated as a single faunal unit (Bold, 1946, 1963). After a study of faunas from Trinidad, Panama, and the Dominican Republic, stratigraphic ranges of several of the species proved to be restricted and the formation now can be subdivided into three ostracode zones.

1. An upper zone with Cytherelloidea leonensis Howe, Costa walpolei (van den Bold), Pterygo-

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