INTRODUCTION

The geologic record of the Paleogene (Paleocene, Eocene, and Oligocene) crabs of North America is recorded in a scattered literature loosely tied together by two monographs written by Mary J. Rathbun (1926 and 1935). Since these syntheses, no comprehensive review of decapod work in the Early Tertiary of North America has been attempted. The purpose of this note is to draw the literature and its information together into a single source, and, as far as possible, synthesize the distribution, occurrence, and preservational aspects of the known faunas, illustrating parts of them to stimulate the search for and collection of known and undiscovered decapod localities. The data is presented as brief regional discussions of various faunas. Some faunas are illustrated to establish a visual record of some of the taxa present. Age of the faunas was established by reference to Toulmin (1977) and Cook and Bally (1975). Via Boada (1969) has recently studied the Eocene decapods of Spain and reviews much of what we know about various taxa. No attempt is made in this note to validate, nor invalidate taxa or distributions. This paper, we hope, will serve as an entry vehicle to this important segment of decapod history in North America.

PALEOCENE DECAPODS

The earliest Tertiary decapod fauna in North America is a diverse and abundant fauna from the Pine Barren Member of the Clayton Formation, Wilcox County, Alabama. Rathbun (1935:11) tabulated 30 species of decapods from the Sucarnoochee beds of Alabama. The Pine Barren and Prairie Creek sections (Table 1) contained 3 lobsters, 8 thallasinoids, 2 scyllarids, 2 hermit crabs, and 10 brachyurans. This important fauna is in desperate need of review in light of its abundance, diversity and proximity to the Cretaceous-Tertiary boundary, apparently representing a decapod assemblage, perhaps a biocoenosis.

Table 1. Decapods of the Pine Barren Member, Clayton Formation, Wilcox County, Alabama (Rathbun, 1935).

- Hoploparia johnsoni Rathbun, 1935
- Nephropsis midwayensis Rathbun, 1935
- Upogebia midwayensis Rathbun, 1935
- Callianassa zeta Rathbun, 1936
- Callianassa eta Rathbun, 1936
- Callianassa theta Rathbun, 1936
- Callianassa delta Rathbun, 1935
- Callianassa epsilon Rathbun, 1935
- Callianassa alabamensis Rathbun, 1935
- Callianassa ulrichi Rathbun, 1935
- Linuparus wilcoxensis Rathbun, 1935
- Scyllarella gibbera Rathbun, 1935
- Scyllarella aspera Rathbun, 1935
- Dromilites americana Rathbun, 1935
- Hepatiscus americanus Rathbun, 1935
- Raninoides ovalis Rathbun, 1935
- Notosceles bourni Rathbun, 1935
- Raninella eocenica Rathbun, 1935
- Symethis johnsoni Rathbun, 1935
- Symethis bidentata Rathbun, 1935
- Xanthilites alabamensis Rathbun, 1935
- Panopeus estellensis Rathbun, 1935
- Galenopsis americana Rathbun, 1935
- Paguristes johnsoni Rathbun, 1935
- Pagurus alabamensis Rathbun, 1935