

**Caribbean Marine Research Center:
Focus on Aquaculture**

ROBERT I. WICKLUND,¹ GERALDINE A WENZ,¹
ROBERT B. McGEACHIN¹ AND SYDNEY SINCLAIR-SANDS²

¹Caribbean Marine Research Center
100 E. 17th Street
Riviera Beach, Florida 33404 and
Lee Stocking Island
Exuma Cays, Bahamas

²Department of Fisheries
Ministry of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Local Government
P.O. Box N-3028
Nassau, Bahamas

A new research center has been established at Lee Stocking Island, Exuma Cays, Bahamas, and at Riviera Beach, Florida, with a focus on marine aquaculture, tropical and subtropical ecosystems and marine science education. Initial research on seawater rearing of several species of tilapia was undertaken beginning in the summer of 1984. A red hybrid Oreochromis mossambica has been selected for seawater and has shown the greatest promise in terms of growth and survival. Presently, growth of juvenile hybrid O. mossambica in seawater pools receiving commercial feed is being compared to that of the same fish in pools not being fed, but receiving direct fertilization with chicken manure. Also, the fry are acclimatized and subsequently reared in cages in seawater. The Center has also initiated comparative studies of standing stocks of food species in the Caribbean. Areas known to be heavily fished will be compared to areas relatively untouched. For this project, the 85-foot research vessel UNDERSEA HUNTER has been outfitted with a decompression chamber and other diving equipment. Other projects include population studies of juvenile queen conch (Strombus gigas), construction of artificial reefs for juvenile fish, and marine geological surveys.