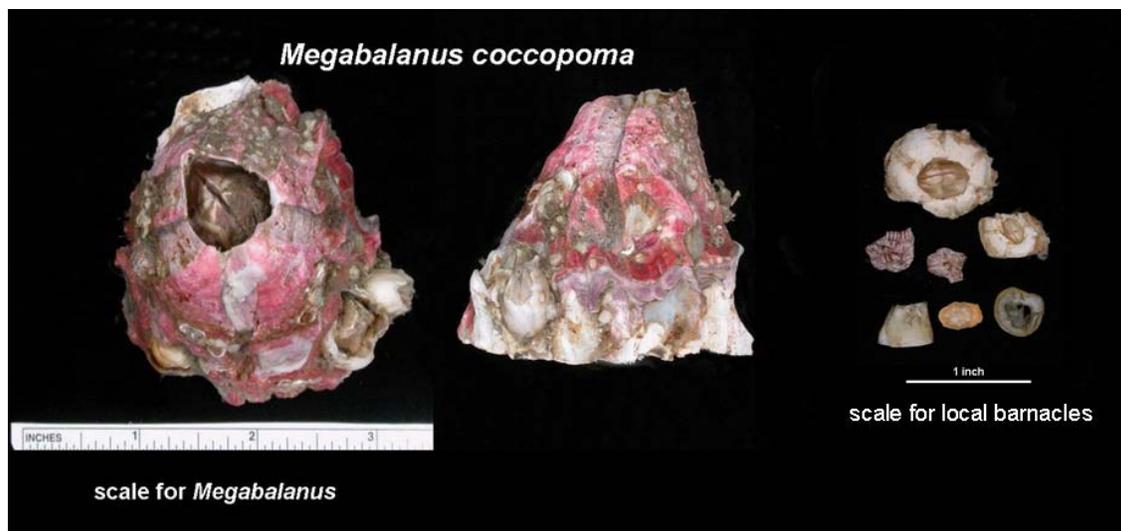


**titan acorn barnacle (*Megabalanus coccopoma*)**

The large tropical Eastern Pacific barnacle, *Megabalanus coccopoma*, was first collected from South Carolina waters in the Folly River, near Charleston Harbor, in the fall of 2006. Since that time, its presence has been documented in Port Royal Sound, on Edisto Island, Kiawah Island, Folly Beach and Sullivans Island. Known historically from the coast of Baja California through Central and South America to the Gulf of Guayaquil in southern Ecuador, the species appeared as far north as San Diego, following a warm “El Niño” event in 1982-83. The species has also been found in Belgium, and it has become established in southern Brazil, as well. In 2002, *M. coccopoma* was found in



Louisiana, and more recently, in 2006, on the Atlantic coast near St. Augustine, FL, Savannah, GA, and as far north as Wrightsville Beach, NC. Known to favor “new” structures for settlement, this barnacle may have significant impact on boat owners by fouling hulls and settling on propellers and driveshafts. It also prefers fairly high salinities, and has been found fouling coastal navigation buoys in Georgia and Belgium.



Like other barnacles, *M. coccopoma* is a gregarious settler, and since it reaches a much larger size than native species of barnacles in South Carolina, it may require greater maintenance efforts on surfaces exposed to coastal and high salinity estuarine areas. Water temperatures may prevent its permanent establishment in South Carolina, and population die offs in the winter of 2009-10 are suspected to be the result of low water temperatures. The recent warming trend of sea surface temperatures, however, may be a controlling factor in its northward dispersal.