

THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

CIRCULAR NO. 13.

AUGUST, 1960.

PAGE 1.

(Re-printed 1977)

MEETING:

Members are invited to our next meeting which will be held on Tuesday September 13th at 8 o'clock in the Zoology Department of the University of Cape Town in Rondebosch.

The family for display and discussion will be BUCCINIDAE. Although foreign representatives may be displayed, particular attention should be paid to the local representatives of this family. Included in this family are Charitodoron, Babylonia, Engina, Cantharus, Nassaria, Africominella, Burnupena and Euthria, with a total of about two dozen species recorded from S. Africa.

Agenda:-

1. Minutes of last meeting
2. Matters arising out of the minutes.
3. Election of members.
4. Proposal of members
5. Any other business
6. Display of deep sea mollusks which were recently trawled off the South African coast, with an introduction by Mr F.H. Tablot.

During tea there will be an opportunity of discussing the displayed material as well as for exchanging of shells. If necessary, lifts can possibly be arranged - please contact Mrs Kerr (775369).

At our next meeting, the date of which has still to be fixed, the family for display will be FASCIOLARIIDAE, which includes:- Fasciolaria, Latirus, Peristernia and Fusus. This early advice will give members an opportunity of bringing their collections up to date.

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ABOUT MEMBERS:

Resignation:- Miss Pamela Rayner is resigning from the Society, as she will be leaving the country shortly.

Correction: In our Circular No. 12 it was stated that Miss Natalie Evans was going overseas and resigning from the Society. Members will be pleased to hear that although she is going overseas she is not resigning from the Society.

Election: At our last meeting the following was elected:
Master Martin Plaut, "Bridle House", Bridle Road, Oranjezicht, Cape Town.

New Address:- Mrs I. Fynn, P.O. Box 640, Salisbury, S. Rhodesia.

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MEETING HELD AT THE S.A. MUSEUM ON 14TH JULY, 1960

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed and new members elected and proposed. Prof Day welcomed Dr Hannah Pienaar, our member from Bethulie, O.F.S. We were very pleased to have her with us.

The Secretary then went through the General Notes in Circular No. 12, and items were discussed and articles commented upon.

During the tea interval, Prof Day and Mr Talbot judged the excellent displays of Muricidae, and Mrs J. Weakley gained the most points for hers. The mystery prize, kindly donated by Mr Hutt, was a beautiful stool with Port Alfred shells inlaid under glass. Our thanks to Mr Hutt for making and presenting it to the Society.

The films "Mollusca" and "Sea-shell Animals", were then shown, and were enjoyed by all. A vote of thanks was given to the S.A. Museum for allowing us to use their lecture room.

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GENERAL NOTES:

Master Christopher Walker has a limited number of complete Pholas jordani, which were collected on Muizenberg beach, for exchange. Anybody interested, please contact him ("Lisieux", Capri Road, St. James).

Dr and Mrs Colton, 7031A Walker Avenue, Bell, California, are interested in exchanging shells with someone in this area.

Miss Marion Ford, "Merton", 3 Macquarie Street, Jaree, Manning River, N.S.W., Australia, writes that she is interested in exchanging shells, preferably with one of our lady members.

With reference to Mr P.J. le Roux's remarks on Bullia (Circular 11, page 2), Mrs M. Kuttel writes us as follows:-

"You may be interested to hear that I found several live specimens of this Bullia in the lagoon at Langebaan at the bay end beyond the hotel on the sand in the water, and also took some out of the sand an inch or so below the surface as the tide was rising. Further down the beach about a mile from the hotel there was many Bullia rhodostoma as the tide came in but small specimens. Many of the laevisima were very rough with green slime on them especially the larger specimens. Live Bullia annulata, larger than live ones I found in the Knysna Lagoon, are also to be found at Langebaan in the same area which is between the jetty and the Air Force slip."

In a letter addressed to the S.A. Museum Mrs W.D. McNally, Ras Tanura, Saudi Arabia, indicates that she is interested in exchanging shells; only specimens which were collected alive are acceptable.

Prof B. Kaspiew, 63 Duffy Str., Ainslie, A.V.T., Australia, has a wide range of Australian and Tasmanian shells for sale and exchange. Any members interested?

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NOTES ON THE GENUS "TONNA" (formerly "DOLIUM") IN SOUTH AFRICA
by D.H. Kennelly

The South African species "Tonna porcellarum", Euthyme, 1885, is probably well known to collectors. It is known to occur from East London round to Jeffreys Bay, and possibly extends northwards to Natal and westwards to Cape Agulhas. No definite information is available about the latter part of the range for inclusion in these notes.

At Jeffreys Bay the species, known as the "Boxing Glove", seems to live well below low water mark. Large specimens are occasionally found in pools among the rocks at low water, and smaller examples may be recovered from the usual deposit of shells etc., washed up on the beach. Examples are rather scarce and are usually found only after heavy weather and high seas.

In 1892 Sowerby listed this shell as "Dolium luteostoma" Kuster, and stated there was very little difference between Japanese and South African specimens. However, Turton (1932) was apparently satisfied that a difference existed and listed our shell as "Dolium porcellarum", Euthyme.

The writer has specimens from Japan, so was able to compare them with our shells of a similar size, a procedure which revealed the undermentioned points:-

1. The Japanese shells are much lighter in build, and the colour lighter than our shells.
2. The ribs on the Japanese shells are wider and flatter (slightly) and spaces between the ribs slightly wider than S.African examples show.

With regard to "Tonna dunkeri", Hanley, 1859, this is reported from Port Alfred by Turton. This requires confirmation for it has not been found to occur at Port Elizabeth of Jeffreys Bay.

Two small shells ex the Natal South Coast are in the writers collection which appear to be "T.dunkeri". Turton mentions that the ribs are more numerous and almost touching, but it is very near to "T.porcellarum". Perhaps my fellow collector, Mr Elston of Durban, may be able to supply further information relating to the shells of the Natal Coast.

References: ^{The} Marine Shells of South Africa, G.B. Sowerby, 1892.
^{The} Marine Shells of Port Alfred, W.H. Turton, 1932.

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NOTES ON "CYMATIUM OLEARIUM", DESHAYES. by D.H. Kennelly.

This is a well known shell occurring on our coast, and is of more than passing interest for its range is practically worldwide. Therefore it is not surprising to find this species listed under other specific names in certain parts of the world. The purpose of these notes is to present a summary - and the latest opinion - for the benefit of members.

Reeves' "Conchologia Iconica" contains a monograph on the genus "Triton", which lists "Triton olearium", Deshayes with the following synonyms:-

Murex olearium, Linn.
 Murex costatus, Born
 Murex parthenopus, Dillwyn
 Triton succinctus, Lamarck
 Habitat: Med. Sea.

G.B. Sowerby, "Marine Shells of S. Africa", 1892, lists Triton olearium, Deshayes, with Triton succinctus, Lamarck, as a synonym. The habitat is given as Japan, Australia, Red Sea, Med. Sea, West Indies and Brazil. Also mentioned as being common in South Africa.

During the ensuing 50 years scientists and workers found the old genus "Triton" too unwieldy. This generic name was abandoned in favour of new genera such as "Charonia", "Cymatium" and "Monoplex", etc., a procedure which facilitates the study and better understanding of the shells hitherto grouped under "Triton". Maxwell Smith in "Triton, Helmet and Harp Shells", 1948, lists "Cymatium (Monoplex) costatum", Born, which was the name applied to the Brazilian representative. In Australia and New Zealand the name "Cymatium" was dropped and we find the Australian shell listed as "Monoplex australasiae", Perry, while in New Zealand they have "Monoplex parthenopus", Von Salis, with "Monoplex australasiae", Perry, as a synonym.

Turning to Japan we find T. Kira, "Illustrated Japanese Shells", 1954, listed the shell as "Cymatium (Monoplex) echo", Koroda & Habe.

The latest commentary is by Dr W.J. Clench of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Mass. In "Johnsonia" No. 36, Vol 3, Dec. 1957, Dr Clench reviews the "Cymatidae", and states that the correct name for C. olearium, Deshayes, is Cymatium parthenopeum, Von Salis, 1793. Dr Clench mentioned that after a comparison of specimens from widely separated localities all over the world, he cannot find any difference between the shells. Whether Dr Clench's opinion will cause a revision to be made of the names applied in Japan, Australia and New Zealand remains to be seen.

As far as the writer is able to ascertain the range in South Africa is from East London as far as Plettenberg Bay, but no doubt it extends further and it is hoped members will be able to send in further information. Cymatium parthenopeum is easily identified by its shape and the dense hairy periostracum on fresh dead or taken alive examples. It appears to live well below low tide mark, hence it is not often found on the beach. The best specimens are usually found after heavy weather.

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CONES: by P.J. le Roux

For a number of years I have been interested in the Conidae family and the following observations representing a few of my experiences on the Cape coast may be of interest to collectors.

Cones in South Africa are found at the lowest point of spring tides in the cochlear zone and in sublittoral area. Cones will be found in their hiding places and that is where to look for them. They like a rocky sheltered coast with the hiding place under a rock or boulder, the bigger the better. When no large rocks are available they prefer those rocks that are semi-fixed with coral, barnacle or other tube-building worms to a rocky base. They do not like a mud or sand bottom and in any case will never,

except an occasional juvenile, be found attached to a rock but live in holes or partly covered under small stones, etc. found under big rocks. The natural habitat of cones is under the boulder and not on the boulder. It is for this reason that practically all old or fullgrown cones have the periostracum rubbed off during the manoeuvring in and out of their hiding places and when this covering is rubbed off the cones are liable to be attacked by marine growths and often erode to such an extent as to eradicate their beautiful markings. Mature cones have been collected alive in Cape waters up to $3.1/16$ inches long and $1.5/16$ inches wide.

It is apparently generally accepted that cones prey on other molluscs boring into their shells and sucking out their juices but why are dead shells never found under those stones where the cones have their habitat? I am afraid that many of the habits attributed to cones are not applicable to those on our shores. For instance, our cones do not have vicious tempers nor is their food chiefly bivalve mollusks. Of the many hundreds of cones collected alive not a single one has been found in the vicinity of bivalves with the exception of *Thecalia concamerata*. These two species apparently live amiably together.

That cones have a sting that injects a poison which may prove fatal to human beings apparently does not apply to our Cape cones who are timid to the extreme and can under no circumstances be classified as having a vicious temper - in fact our cone is a perfect lady or gentleman in spite of the fact that they do possess the so-called coiled poison gland.

Cones deposit their eggs in capsules cemented on the underside of large rocks. The capsules are approximately $3/4$ inches high, $3/8$ inches wide and $1/8$ inch thick. The thickness will presumably increase proportionately as the time for hatching draws nearer. The capsules very closely resemble those shown in figure 39, page 19, of Dr Barnard's "A Beginner's Guide to South African Shells".

After collecting a large number of egg capsules I was at last rewarded and found four capsules nearly ready to hatch. The young cones number 18 to a capsule and their colour is brownish. The young are hatched with shell complete and those found in the capsule were approximately between 1 and 2 millimetres in length - about the size of a pin's head. The actual number of eggs in the capsule appears to be about three times the number of juveniles found in those capsules ready to hatch.

Two cones were found in the act of cementing their capsules to a stone. When picked up the egg cases were still attached to their bodies and when the shells were dropped into absolute alcohol they immediately retracted the capsules into their shells. The above cases and others collected during February and March had capsules inside their shells so spawning time is apparently January to March. Where cone capsules were observed at least one fullgrown cone was certain to be in the immediate vicinity under the same boulder.

Does the ridiculously small operculum of the cone serve the same purpose as the finger or toe nail to the human being? This and many other cone secrets remain to be solved.

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NOTES ON "HALIOTIS ALFREDENSIS", BARTSCH, 1915

by D.H. Kennelly

As most members are aware, this species was described by Bartsch from two specimens collected by Turton at Port Alfred. The species appears to be rather rare, and the writer has failed to find it at Port Elizabeth (Cape Recife) or Jeffreys Bay. Port Alfred would appear to be the southern limit of its range, from which locality it extends northwards as far as Natal, as far as our present knowledge is concerned.

However, Mr R.R. Talmadge of Willow Creek, California, has been making a special study of the "Haliotidae" in recent years, and very kindly sent an author's separate on his conclusions to the writer. Mr Talmadge obtained two specimens from Pondoland, unnamed, which were tentatively identified as "*Haliotis speciosa*", Reeve, 1846, but the locality of Reeve's shells was not known. Subsequently the Pondoland shells were sent to the British Museum for comparison with the type set in the Hugh Cuming collection used by Reeve,

and the identification was "Haliotis speciosa", Reeve. This finding was confirmed by the United States National Museum in Washington after the type of "Haliotis alfredensis" was compared with the two Pondoland shells.

It is now proposed that the following synonymy be used:-
 Haliotis speciosa, Reeve, 1846
 Haliotis alfredensis, Bartsch, 1915

The writer understands that the Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg, has specimens all identified as being "Haliotis speciosa".

The paper written by Mr Talmadge was published in the Journal of Conchology, Vol.24, No.8, August 1958.

References:- Conchologia Iconica, L. Reeve, 1846, Haliotidae 3, Sp.47
 U.S.N.M. Bull 91, S. African Shells, P. Bartsch, 1915.
 Marine Shells of Port Alfred, W.H. Turton, 1932.

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SOME REMARKS ON "ARGONAUTA ARGO", LINN., AND OTHER SPECIES OCCURRING IN SOUTH AFRICA.
 by D.H. Kennelly

All collectors are desirous of possessing one or two specimens of the lovely fragile shell mentioned above, which occurs all around our coastline. The species is classed as rare, but its rarity is more apparent than real, for being so fragile there must be many dozen specimens smashed on our beaches compared with the occasional one or two found intact.

The best examples the writer has seen were mostly recovered by men in the fishing boats who spotted the shells floating about in the sea. In the area East London to Jeffreys Bay, July and August appear to be the months when these shells are most likely to be found.

"Argonauta argo" (or Paper Nautilus) is practically worldwide in distribution but there are other species occurring on our coast whose range seems to be more restricted. The following species are recorded from our coast, and all three are rare:-

Argonauta nodosa, Solander.
 " grunneri, Dunker.
 " bottgeri, Maltzan

A.nodosa is common on the coast of South Australia, while A.argo - common in South Africa - is rare.

Cotton & Godfrey of the South Australian Museum, Adelaide, make the following observation:-

"A wellknown and experienced collector on Troubridge Shoal, near Edithburgh, in three years took more than 500 "Paper Nautilus" shells, of which he says about ten were A.argo."

The writer has noted one specimen of A.grunneri from Port Alfred, and two of A.nodosa - one from Jeffreys Bay and the other from Port Alfred.

With regard to A.bottgeri, the writer found one on Humewood Beach, Port Elizabeth, some twenty years ago, and so far has never had the luck to find another.

References:- The Marine Shells of Port Alfred, Turton, 1932.
 Marine Shells of South Africa, Sowerby, 1892.
 The Molluscs of South Australia, Cotton & Godfrey, Part 2, 1940

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