

The Strandloper

BULLETIN OF THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA



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A COLLECTING TRIP TO THE SOUTHERN-MOST POINT OF AFRICA

by R.O. CARLSSON

Cape Agulhas – the southern-most part of Africa, the geographical meeting place of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, the scene of countless shipwrecks and oil spills, and, above all, the home of *Conus scitulus scitulus*.

This was the place we decided to visit during the spring tides of 4th and 5th of April. What, you may ask decided us to travel 214 kilometers in the hope of finding a few shells? The answer to this is to be found in Circular No. 130 of June 1971 where you will find an article by Professor J.K. Mallory entitled "The effects of the Stranding of the Tanker 'Wafra'". This article told the story of how, on 28th February, 1971, the Motor Tanker 'Wafra', loaded with 63 174 tons of crude oil, went ashore about eight kilometers east of Cape Agulhas, and in the process, rupturing three cargo tanks and releasing a large quantity of oil, which in turn caused heavy pollution of about 15 kilometers of coast line. The article relates how examination revealed that marine life in the intertidal zone was badly affected but that it appeared that life in deeper water had suffered no ill effects. Nothing more was reported about the shelling conditions at Agulhas (possibly because members were asked not to shell the area until there had been full recovery) until February this year when Mrs Botes, a new member in Cape Town, reported fairly good finds in the area. Our trip was undertaken mainly to ascertain the extent of the recovery of the marine life.

The full moon was at 0609 hours on Monday 4th April, with the low tides at 0929 on the same day and 1010 the next. It was originally planned to make the trip on the Sunday afternoon, spending Sunday and Monday nights at the hotel and returning to Cape Town on the Tuesday afternoon. This would have given us two very good shelling sessions. However, our departure on the Sunday was delayed so we changed our plans and decided to leave early on the Monday morning.

The alarm clock disturbed our beauty sleep at the unearthly hour of 0430 and by 0530 we were on our way. The weather was good, the roads empty and driving was a pleasure in the crisp early morning air. From the top of Sir Lowry's Pass we were treated to that gorgeous view across twenty-odd kilometers of light-studded countryside to see Devils Peak, with Table mountain in the background, and the whole of False Bay as far as Cape Point. In my

opinion this is one of the most beautiful sights in the whole of South Africa, an opinion shared by all Cape Townians. From this vantage point we also had an excellent view of the partial eclipse of the moon. However, as we could not stand and admire the scenery all day we drove on again. At Caledon we branched off the N2 highway and the next hour's driving was not quite so enjoyable – directly into the rising sun. At Bredasdorp one realises that civilisation is inclined to follow one out of the cities in that we had to stop at the southern-most set of traffic lights in Africa – not another living person in sight but there we sat while the lights went slowly through their regulated movements of green (just as we approached), amber, red and eventually back to green and so to set us on the last, almost straight, stretch of road to Agulhas.

At Agulhas we parked the car between the twin tidal swimming pools at 0830, exactly three hours after leaving home and, as we had planned, one hour before low tide.

Stephen and Andrew surveyed the scene, quickly took in the swimming pools, and announced in unison "We are not shelling". They promptly donned bathing costumes and made a bee-line for the nearest of the pools. Thelma and I also made a bee-line, but ours was for the rocks. The first thing that struck us was that there was no sign whatsoever of oil spillage. The rocks were cleaner, as was the surrounding beach, than some areas around the Cape Peninsula. The second thing we noticed was that there was an abundance of sea life with plenty of seaweed, but, as usual when we go collecting, the shells seemed to be away on holiday. However, it transpired that they were just sleeping late. Once our eyes became accustomed to the rock pools we saw the shell in their hundreds – *Oxysteles*, *Thais*, *Turbo*, *Burnapena*, small *Haliotis*, *Patella* – in fact, you name it and there it was. We did not collect these more common shells because we were not coming back again on the next day when we could collect all we wanted and take them home fresh and odourless! After nearly an hour's searching we started finding the *Conus scitulus scitulus*, a smallish shell of a little over 20 mm. in length. These we did collect discarding those that were imperfect or smaller than average, as they had been hard to find and who could guarantee that we would be able to find them again the next day. No matter how hard we searched we could find no trace

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of *Marginella*, even with the aid of the sharp eyes of Stephen and Andrew who had by now decided that, after all, the water in the pool was a bit on the chilly side.

After two and a half hours of crouching and lifting rocks we decided we had had enough and would spend the rest of the day sight seeing. So back along the road towards Bredasdorp to Struisbaai where we stopped for a while at a small fishing harbour. Out at sea, high and dry, on a reef was the battered remains of a bulk ore carrier which ran aground about five years ago. Further along the Bredasdorp road we branched off onto a rough farm road and made our way towards Arniston, a little village named after a transport ship which was wrecked there in 1815 with the loss of all but six of the 350 passengers. By this time it was time for lunch so we made our way to the only place where one can get food in the village — the hotel. We had intended booking rooms for the night but, after seeing the tariff, decided to settle for lunch only and return home later in the day. After lunch we tried to find the Waënhuiskrans, a sea cave literally large enough to accommodate an ox wagon and team, but as it was by now high spring tide, and as the cave must be approached from seaward we could not get to it. So back to the village for an enjoyable swim in the clear light blue sea. At 1500 hours it was time to say good bye to a very pleasant spot and make our way home over the return trip of another 214 kilometers — into the setting sun.

All agreed that it had been a most enjoyable outing till we remembered all those shells we had intended collecting on the Tuesday morning!

CHANGES TO JANUARY 1977, MEMBERSHIP LIST

ADDITIONS:

- 1971 Mrs P.A. Prentice, P.O. Box 245, Halfway House 1685
 1969 Mrs N.E. Cumming, c/o Mazoe Citrus Estate, P.O. Mazoe, Rhodesia.
 1970 Mr R. Ruben, P.O. Box 61685, Marshalltown 2107.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

- 1976 Master M.A. Cowley, 148 Widney Lane, Solihull, West Midlands B91 3LH, England.
 1976 Mrs D.M. Kock, 29 Margoe Road, Emmerentia 2195.
 1969 Mrs E.M.D. Roscoe, Blue Bend, P.O. Box 2021, Beacon Bay 5205.
 1974 Mr B. Lafferty, 210-542 Queenston Road, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8K 1K3.
 1975 Mrs F. Stager, c/o Cox, Kilfane Cottage, 15 Kings Avenue, Minnis Bay, Birchington, Kent, England.

NEW MEMBERS:

- Mrs V.F. Stevens, 3 Protea Court, Marsh Street, Mossel Bay 6500;
 Mr C. Samson-Bouret, 11 Charles Street, Hampton, Victoria 3188, Australia.
 Mr J.B. de Parseval, SSPT — B.P. 36, Thies, Senegal.
 Mr D. Boust, B.P. 882, Port Vila, New Hebrides.
 M.D. Salvatore Russo, Parco Tasso 1, 80065, Sorrento (Naples), Italy.
 M.D. Umberto Aubry, via Degli Aranci 80, 80065, Sorrento (Naples) Italy.
 Mrs R.E. White, 1108 Brunwood Drive, Florence, South Carolina 29501, U.S.A.
 Mr N. Owen-Johnson, 212 The Villa, Holt Street, Sandton 2199.
 Mrs E.M. Bruce, P.O. Box 248, Knysna 6570.
 Mrs. F.M. Lennon, 10 Aberdeen Street, Westdene, Johannesburg 2092.
 Mr A.C. Sinclair, P.O. Box 1521, East London 5200.
 Mrs K. Erasmus, 22 The Drive, Bunkers Hill, East London 5241.
 Mr R. Scott Rutherford, Port Elizabeth Museum, Humewood, P.O. Box 13147, Port Elizabeth 6000.
 Mrs. J.E. Tasker, "Tramonta", 19 John Bailie Road, Bunkers Hill, East London 5241
 Mrs N.J.F. Watt, 1001 Arnhem, Loxton Road, Milnerton 7405.
 Mr J. van den Berg, P.O. Box 68204, Bryanston 2021.

OUR SMALLEST TURBINIDAE

by C.M. CONNOLLY

Sorting shells from shingle has been my main form of collecting the last few years. I have thirty small shells, each about 4 x 4 mm, from Gonubie that match the colours and shape of *Phasianella striolata* Turton, *Phasianella piperia* Turton and *Leptothyra albocincta* Turton. These shells all have strong spiral cords with wide spaces, a round aperture and a beaded cord round the small umbilicus. It seems that Turton only had a half dozen or so, and it may be that Gonubie is more likely the area where a live shell may be found. Turton's shells of course came from Port Alfred.

AROUND THE GROUPS

CAPE TOWN: Our April meeting was again poorly attended and Mr Kapp proposed that the meetings be changed to a Monday evening. This proposal was seconded by Miss Gould and in view of the poor response to the circular sent to members it was decided that as from June the meetings would be held on the second Monday of each month. Reports of *Nautilus* and *Janthina* finds from Muizenberg were noted. Mrs Connolly reported that she had some baffling finds among shale and seaweed from Dalebrook. The shells for display and discussion were the Trochidae. At our May meeting Thelma Carlsson took the Chair in the absence of Betty Giles. It was reported that Callum Giles had been sick and we wish him a speedy recovery. Richard Carlsson reported briefly on a shelling trip to Agulhas and thereafter David Freeman spoke about the shells on display, the Mitridae.

PORT ELIZABETH: With the apologies from five we had an attendance of eight members at our April meeting. It was reported that the P.E. Museum were asking all Societies who make use of the Lecture Hall to become subscribers to the Museum at a cost of R25 per year. As this amount is beyond our means it was decided that future meetings could be held at members' homes. The Cassididae and Tellinidae were then discussed. Our May meeting was the Annual General Meeting of the Group. It was decided that although the Group was solvent, the tea donation would be raised to 20 cents per meeting. This increase was necessary to cover the increased cost of sending out the notices. Our new committee is:— Chairman, Mrs Mears; Vice-Chairman, Mrs Felgate; Secretary, Mr Graeve; and members, mesdames Ball, Hoogenhout and Watters. Mr Graeve showed *Trivia costata* from Sea Point and *Terebra kowiensis* from Port Elizabeth. The Chitons and Turritellidae were then discussed.

EAST LONDON: With the apologies from two we had a good attendance of thirteen at our April meeting. Members brought recent finds to be identified. Michael Els re-

ported a live Trivia from Blue Bend, Connie Hulley a live Trivia and Cone from Xora and Peter Berndt a live *Haliotis parva* from Cape St. Francis. The shells on display at the meeting were the Muricidae and Michael spoke and read notes about this family. Our May meeting was also well attended with, once again, thirteen members present and with five apologies. Mrs Eva Roscoe gave a very interesting talk on the Conidae. She had a beautiful array of Moçambique cones and several members brought trays of specimens to exhibit and to be named.

DURBAN: This surely must be "Red Letter" time as far as the Natal Group is concerned. Isn't it really great that at last we have made progress on our project and can report a really good start. The first of the families have been ably handled by Maureen. Another great step forward was made as a result of Bernie's visit to the Natal Museum. He learnt that the boxes in which they had been keeping their shells are no longer suitable and are now for sale. It has been decided to spend some of our savings on these boxes for the housing of our reference collection. So with the cabinets we made for the show and now these boxes we can soon make a start on our display. In April, on Durban South Beach, just two years after another strike (in June 1975), Bernie made one of his lucky "strikes". The species most in evidence was *Oliva caroliniana*. Among the olives were two very much resembling *O. paxillus*, which if confirmed, may prove to be an extension of this species.

PRETORIA: Ons April vergadering was die Vierde Algemene Jaarlikse Vergadering van die Groep. Dit is besluit dat ons komitee bly staan. Nadat die besigheid voltooi is, is 'n baie interessante film oor die teelplaas van skaars diersoorte van die Nasionale Dieretuin deur Laurie vertoon. Die skyfies wat deur Prof. Rippey geneem was van ons skou verlede jaar is ook vertoon. It was decided at our May Meeting that in future our meetings would be held on the second Tuesday of each month. This year's show, which will be held from 3rd to 5th November was also discussed. Postal entries would be accepted for classes 1 to 32 but must be in the hands of the Secretary by the end of September. Show schedules would be posted to all Groups during June. Laurie then gave a most interesting talk, illustrated with slides, on marine molluscs.

EXCHANGES WANTED:

- Mr T. Thorn, 4 Barnehurst Road, Barnehurst, Kent, England. Wants to obtain specimens of *Pteropurpura (Poropteron) uncinarius* and *Pteropurpura (Poropteron) incurvispina*. Would members able to assist please contact Mr Thorn.
- Mrs M.F. Yergin, 2706 Cameron Blvd., Isle of Palms, South Carolina 29451, U.S.A. Would like to contact members with the view of exchanging.
- Mr F.P. Fischer, Zool. Inst. d Univ. München, Luisenstr. 14, D8000 München 2, West Germany. Is working on the dorsal sence organs of Chitons and would like to obtain formaldehyde-fixed specimens to assist in his studies.
- Mr J.B. de Parseval, SSPT - B.P. 36, Thies, Senegal. Wants to contact members with the view to exchanging rare Cypraea.
- Madam Sabine Süb, 927 Hohenstein-Ernstthal, Fritz Heckert-Siedlung 53, German Democratic Republic. Would like to contact members with the view to exchanging shells.
- Anita L. Blondin, 1808 Circle Drive, Juno, Florida 33408, U.S.A. Would like to contact members with the view to exchanging.

REVISED LIST OF FAMILIES AND GENERA OF MARINE AND ESTUARINE MOLLUSCA RECORDED FROM SOUTHERN AFRICA

We announce that this list by Prof. J.H. Day has now been published by the Society. The original edition published in August 1962, has been completely revised and to quote from the forward of the revised edition:

"The list of families and genera which I compiled in 1962 is now quite out of date. In drawing up this revised list I have used the old one as a basis for it summarises many early records but I have also made many changes. I have corrected many errors and have extended the area from South Africa to Southern Africa so as to include the records from Moçambique as far north as Inhambane, but I have not included Angola since it has a distinct West African fauna. I have added the new genera and subgenera reported from the area in recent scientific publications . . ."

This publication is now available from the Secretary at R1,50 per copy, postage free to members in Southern Africa. Members resident outside this area are requested to add extra to cover postage.

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The Financial year runs from 1st July to 30th June, and
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tution in South Africa may join as Student Members on
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The Society's Bulletin, The Strandloper, is issued free to
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loper at the following rates:

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	141 to 160	R2,00
	161 to 170	10 cents each, no index.

Write to the Secretary, P.O. Box 98, Howard Place 7450

INTERTIDAL TALK

Mrs V.F. Stevens, a new member from Mossel Bay, is at the moment working at the Mossel Bay Museum trying to sort out the shell collection there. She has recently written to us and the following is an extract from her letter. "The shell collection in our Museum is considered by many to be the best in the Republic, but unfortunately I am not a Conchologist, and although the shells have been displayed according to the catalogue in our possession, there seems to be quite a few errors in the naming of the shells. Should any members passing through Mossel Bay at any time, I wonder if they could call on me and assist with this very important job of correctly identifying the shells." We are sure that a number of our members pass through Mossel Bay at some time or other and that a couple of hours break from driving will not delay the traveller too much and would assist Mrs Stevens no end.

We regularly publish lists of collectors wanting to exchange shells. It must be understood that these collectors are unknown to us and that we cannot guarantee their good faith or specimens. Responsibility for a good exchange is between the exchanging parties and is not the responsibility of the Society. Likewise all advertisements are accepted in good faith and the Society does not hold itself responsible for any transaction arising from any advertisements published.

A KEY TO SOUTH AFRICAN CHITONS

by

J. H. DAY

Professor of Zoology at the University of Cape Town

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Additional list of S.A. Marine Shells found on the Natal/Zululand Coast by B.L. Cock	R0,50
Write to the Secretary, P.O. Box 98, Howard Place 7450.	

*We would welcome any article of interest to
Shell Collectors for future publication.*