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X THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA X
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CIRCULAR NO. 71.

FEBRUARY, 1966.

PAGE 1.

Edited by Leila Kerr.

MEETING.

A very happy and prosperous New Year to all members! The next meeting will be held in the Lecture Hall of the S.A. Museum on Tuesday, 15th February at 8.15 p.m. There will be a general discussion of new finds and shells from your latest parcels. Any member with anything to say is welcome to speak. Bring along your shell problems and our experts will try to help you. There will be a film. Please consult Circular No. 70, Page 2 re Cones for the meeting.

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Minutes of Meeting held at the S.A. Museum 14.12.65.

As Dr. Grindley was away, Mr. Elston was in the chair. He welcomed the large gathering present, especially the visitors. Apologies were received from Mrs. Connolly, Dr. Grindley, Miss Jakobsen, Mr. Kilburn and Mrs. Pinkham. The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The following were elected as members of the Society:-

Mr. C. Appleton, S.A. Museum, Cape Town.
Miss D. Vice, 35, St. James Road, East London.

The following were proposed as new members:-

Mrs. T.W. MacKenzie proposed by E. Dee, seconded by H. Jefferies.
Mrs. S.M. White, " " " " " "

After this business had been attended to, the meeting was handed over to Mrs. Kerr, who welcomed Mr. E. Dee. The latter had a few words to say to us about some shells he had brought with him, the most remarkable being a murex, ex pisce, lent to him by a Durban friend. (More about this, next time).

Mr. Les Cock conveyed greetings from the Natal Group and Mrs. Jefferies from the Border Group.

The meeting then adjourned while the members participated in the competition "Guess Who?" Mrs. Kerr had mounted photographs of members taken when they were very young, and numbered them. This proved more difficult than anticipated, Eileen Lowry being the winner, having 13 right out of 27. Her mother, Max Ackermann was the runner-up with eleven.

There were some excellent shells on display - Max had brought 147 species of Volute and Jock some shells he had skin-dived.

After tea and cakes - our thanks to all those who contributed - we saw a film on the S.A. Museum. The meeting closed with mutual good wishes for the festive season.

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Our President, Mr. D.H. Kennelly, wishes to notify all members that he can be contacted at his home address, 13 Steyn Avenue, Rosemount, East London. He will always be ready to help with identifications, etc. at any time and would welcome news of new finds of shells, also items of interest for the Circulares.

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A REMINDER.

That we still have copies of Cock's Natal Shell List and Kennelly's Wild Coast List.

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BORDER MEMBERS - ATTENTION PLEASE.

By D.H. Kennelly.

A series of meetings for the Border Group at monthly intervals during 1966, has been planned. Details are now published for the benefit of all concerned.

A Genus of South African shells will be selected for display and discussion at each meeting, and a talk will be given.

Members attending are requested to co-operate as far as possible by bringing some specimens of the selected Genus for display. These meetings also afford an opportunity for those attending to bring specimens of other Genera for identification.

As usual, non-member friends who are interested, will be very welcome, also Juniors.

Notices will be sent to all members, giving place, date and time, of all meetings.

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Another Cape Town trip.

by Hazel Jefferies.

Again I thank all my dear friends for their wonderful hospitality and generous gifts of shells. Thank you, thank you, thank you to Leila and Bob Kerr, Maxie and Jack Ackermann, Anne and Jock Dichmont, Audrey and Jack Walker, Eileen Lowry and family, Valda and Mr. Elston, Iris and Mr. Cohen, Padre and Mrs. Pinkham, Mr. and Mrs. P.J. le Roux of Kleinmond, Bobbie and Wally Richards of Mossel Bay, and last but not least, to Edward Dee who made this trip possible for me.

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EXCHANGE WANTED.

Norman G. Wotherspoon, 11 Hargreave Street, Mornington, Victoria, Australia would like to exchange or correspond with young members of either sex.

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CAPE NOTES.

by L. Kerr.

The hectic holidays have quietened down and we are almost back to normal. Thank you, all those members who sent me Xmas cards, the thought is appreciated.

Our new member, Chris Appleton of the Museum, has collected a clump of the small Mytilid mussels, Musculus virgiliae, attached to a reed in the Klein River near Hermanus. So far, its southern limit has been Mossel Bay, and this Hermanus record might mean a new southern limit. Can any members add any information?

Our good friend Graham Ivy and his wife are away on holiday and I quote from his letter -

"While at Gonubie Mouth, East London, we received a heart-warming welcome to attend the Border Group meeting at Bonza Bay.

Mr. Kennelly, who was a friend of my boyhood, I met again after sixty years, and took up the strands just where they were laid down.

The meeting was most interesting, after business and tea, Ken gave us a most erudite talk on South African Patella. Maimie Rix displayed a fine collection for reference.

Hazel Jefferies was also present and gave us a cordial invitation to visit Kei Mouth and see her magnificent collection. Mr. Kennelly was also spending a few days there so we set off. We spent two delightful days shelling and inspecting Hazel's fabulous collection.

Mr. and Mrs. Blomerus from Welkom were nearby in their caravan - conchologists new but keen as mustard. Our little group, Ken dubbed "the Conchomaniacs" as we spent all our time shelling or talking shells.

I have always been keen about my shell collection, but these fine people have fired me with a new enthusiasm."

GENERAL NOTES.

HALIOTIDAE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

By D.H. Kennelly.

There appears to be some uncertainty in regard to the occurrence of Reeve's species of Haliotis in South African waters, and these notes have been compiled to give members some idea of the position as it now stands.

L. Reeve (1846), in his Monograph of Haliotidae in the Conchologia Iconica, described and figured the undermentioned species, viz:-

H. speciosa and H. nebulata, (Plate 14), H. pustulata, (Plate 15), and H. pertusa, (Plate 16).

No locality was given for these species.

Paul Bartsch (1915) described and figured H. alfredensis from Port Alfred. However Talmadge (1958) proved that alfredensis is a synonym of speciosa Reeve, which accounts for one of the four species referred to above.

Spry (1961) lists H. pustulata Reeve as occurring at Dar-es-Salaam thus accounting for another of the species under discussion.

So far as the writer is able to ascertain, pustulata has not been proved to occur at any locality further south.

A little more than thirty years ago, shells were collected at Port Alfred, identified as being pertusa and nebulata, and so listed by Bartsch (1915) and Turton (1932). Barnard (1963) was of opinion that these specimens were not Reeve's species, and placed them under H. sanguinea Hanley. It is of interest to note that Turton (1932) stated he had compared his examples of nebulata with shells so identified in the Albany Museum collection. Unfortunately some five or six years later, the Albany Museum suffered a disastrous fire, and in all probability the shells seen by Turton were destroyed.

It is possible that shells from Port Alfred, and elsewhere, reported as being pertusa, and/or nebulata, are examples of sanguinea in juvenile stages. The writer has seen a great many sanguinea in various stages of growth. Some of these agree to a certain extent with Reeve's species, a fact which misled the writer (1963/4) into listing pertusa as occurring in South Africa. This last reference is better ignored until such time as positive proof is produced of pertusa, and/or nebulata, occurring in South Africa.

A leading scientist in the U.S.A. - the late H.A. Pilsbry - expressed the opinion that these two species may eventually prove to be varieties of H. pustulata Reeve.

- References:
- | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Barnard, K.H. | 1963. | Annals South African Museum
Vol. XLVIII, Part 2, Cont. ... S.A. Shells. |
| Bartsch, Paul. | 1915. | U.S.N.M. Bulletin 91 -
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False Bay to Pondoland. |
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| Talmadge, R.R. | 1958. | Journal of Conchology,
Vol. 24, No. 8, <u>Haliotis speciosa</u> . |

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CYPRAEA LEUCODON BRODERIP, 1828.

By E.T. Haywood.

The following letter was written to the Curator of the Durban Museum by Mr. Haywood, who thought it would be of interest to members. The reply will be published in due course. Editor.

"On a recent visit to the Museum I was somewhat surprised to see a sea-shell on display which someone has at some time identified as 'Cypraea leucodon'. With all due respect to the views of that unknown person, he or she has, I think arrived at an incorrect conclusion, which I would like to see rectified.

I have never seen another Cypraea similar to the one displayed, and even with the aid of "Cowry Shells of World Seas", by Joyce Allan, I am unable to identify it. I am, however, quite convinced that it is not Cypraea leucodon, for the following reasons:-

(a) In Plate 11 of Joyce Allan's book referred to, there is an illustration of Cypraea leucodon, and, although I have not been able to examine the base of your shell, I cannot bring myself to accept that it has sufficient points of similarity;

(b) Joyce Allan, at p. 108 of her book, describes Cypraea leucodon, and says, inter alia, "the general colour at a glance is pale orange-caramel with large whitish spots on the back extending well over the base, and about the size of those on a normal Cypraea tigris." Your shell is whitish - or very pale cream - in colour, with faint pink on the dorsum, and in place of large whitish spots there is reticulation, as to be seen in specimens of Mauritia histrio;

(c) D.H. Kennelly, on p. 8 of Circular No. 69, dated November, 1965, issued by the Conchological Society of Southern Africa, deals with Cypraea leucodon, and states that it is now likely that three specimens exist in the world - one in the British Museum; one at Harvard University; and one reported to have been found recently in the Philippines.

I think I have said enough to warrant further investigation of your shell by an acknowledged authority on Cypraea, with a view to arriving at an accurate identification. As a keen collector of Cypraea myself, I would be very interested to hear the conclusion arrived at, should you decide to pursue the matter, because I think it likely that it is a rare specie of the Cypraea family. Unfortunately the locality where it was found is not disclosed, and may well now be unknown to anyone."

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CYPRAEA TORTIROSTRIS SOWERBY 1906.

By Edward Dee.

Cernohorsky and Joyce Allen appear to have based their observations regarding the race of Cypraea chinensis tertirostris Sowerby 1906 on the pamphlet issued in 1906 describing the race and showing a photograph of a small deformed specimen.

Subsequently, further dead, beach specimens were collected. To date, I have collected six live specimens from the area bounded by Salt Rock on the North Coast and Park Rynie on the South Coast of Natal.

In a previous C.S.S.A. Circular, Mr. Elston wrote about this rare race of Cypraea chinensis. He had inadvertently mistaken the race Cypraea chinensis violacea Rous 1905 (live specimens collected by me on Vetch's Pier, Durban and handed to Mr. Elston) for Cypraea chinensis tortirostris Sowerby 1906. His observations and those of Lt. Col. R. Griffiths have only added to the confusion concerning this Cypraea through not having the correct live material to work on.

For the Members' benefit, I submit a full description of this rare Cypraea chinensis tortirostris Sowerby 1906.

Small elongate shells. Dorsum ground colour blue-mauve with three darker bands and faint brown markings on the dorsum line. Margins calloused and pinky-mauve in colour and spotted with a deeper mauve. Base rounded, teeth strong, numbering 8 on the outer lip and 11 on the columella. Aperture wide, teeth and base flesh pink in colour.

Size: 10 to 13 mm. long, 7 to 8 mm. wide, 5 to 6 mm. high.

Locality: Salt Rock to Port St. John's.

Notes: All Durban live collected specimens are perfectly formed and mature shells from North Pier and Vetch's Pier. They are slightly larger and deeper in colour than those from other areas. This is due, I think, to the close proximity of the sewage outfall.

References:

1. "Prodrome of a Monograph on Living Cypraeidae" F.A. and M. Schilder.
2. "Catalogue of Living Cypraeidae" Walter O. Cernohorsky.

3. Proceedings of the Mal. Soc. of London 1958.
4. " " " " " " " " 1905.
5. " " " " " " " " 1906.
6. " " " Zoological Soc. of London 1905-1906.
7. " " " " " " " Paris 1905-1906.

The last two references are for the description of Cypraea tortirostris Sowerby and Cypraea violacea Rous

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MARGINELLA ROSEA.

by Jeck Dichmont.

It has always puzzled me that shells which are commonly found dead in large or comparatively large numbers on the beach are very difficult indeed to collect alive.

Thais cingulata which are found dead in profusion on Peninsula beaches on the Atlantic side I had never seen alive until working on a wreck in about 60 foot of water and then I only collected 6 live specimens (admittedly I was distracted from my search by reason of old coins I was recovering from the wreck). The single valves of Chlamys tinctus are also found in profusion, yet the live shells are difficult to get. I have recently found that their most common habitat is between pods of red bait - with Lima rotundatum and Cymatium dolarium.

Normally I do not find Marginella rosea in large quantities and I have often dived for two or three hours to find a maximum of six. My normal "catch" is two or three. (I have also found three live M. bairstowi and one live nebulosa).

The two best diving spots I have found are Simonstown harbour and Naval beach. Both of these are sheltered spots but the sea is not too still or dead, being sufficiently aerated by south and north-westerly winds.

The method of taking the shells is by fanning the sandy bottom with a peach box slat, or better still, by diving feet first and pedalling hard with one's flippers. This latter method, if done with real vim and vigour, blows away about an inch of sand and silt for a square yard or so per dive. After the manoeuvre is carried out it looks as if a depth charge has exploded in the area and one must wait for the 'dust' to settle before the area can be searched for the exposed Marginellas. Normally the water is so still that this takes time and sometimes the margins creep back under the sand before the silt has settled.

This weekend, having received an urgent order from my swopping friend in Texas for M. rosea, I slipped into my costume, mask and flippers on Sunday afternoon with my net shell bag.

Conditions were perfect. The sea was a bit chilly - I was not wearing a suit - but the water was gin clear with a slight current running which took away the stirred up silt very quickly.

The very best place to find Marginellas is in clean sand over silt which fringes underwater rocks at a minimum depth of 12 feet. Occasional shells are found in shallower water but very few indeed.

At my very first fanning I found a pair of margins. The sur high and it was a thrill to see the shiny shells gleaming on the bottom with their orange spotted mantles spread. I went on to pick up 31 adult shells and 3 juveniles which I returned, a pair of Cassis iredalei, one double Tellina madagascariensis (dead), 1 live Nassarius plicatus, 1 live Enayrina gemmifera and a couple of big perfect Fusus verruculatus and Pasciolaria lugubris.

Simonstown harbour, or rather the shelly area of it, is in course of being taken over by the South African Navy and a wall is soon to be built across the Bay from the Yacht Club area to the old harbour (Bullnose). This will destroy ultimately all shell life in a very well populated area.

My shells are cleaned and on their way to Texas and I am now waiting for my swaps in return.

NOTE. I have retained two Marginellas. Although normally exceedingly clean shells with a high gloss, each of this pair of shells has a Crepidula on the spire which the animal has covered with layers of transparent nacre. The Crepidula can clearly be seen beneath the layers.

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A NOTE ON THE RARE CYMATIUM RANZANII BIANCONI 1850. By D.H. Kennelly.

Recently the writer received a copy of American Museum Novitates, No. 2108, published 10th Oct. 1962, containing information about this rare species of Cymatium, written by W.K. Emerson and A. D'Attilio of the American Museum of Natural History and the New York Shell Club, respectively.

Although this shell was discovered and described in 1850, nothing further was heard until the period 1953-1959 when Mr. K.J. Grosch, a noted diver and collector of Mozambique, Portuguese East Africa, collected more specimens - alive and dead - of this "long lost" species.

Unable to recognise his find, Mr. Grosch submitted specimens to the American Museum of Natural History for identification in 1961. His action resulted in publication of the paper mentioned above.

The precise locality where the Grosch shells were collected is the Cabaceira Peninsula, Mozambique Bay, about 200 metres off shore in a depth from 6 to 10 metres, at the time of the March Spring tides during 1953/59.

In the absence of further material since 1850, writers placed C. ranzanii Bianconi as a synonym of C. tigrinum Broderip - another rarity occurring in the Panamic faunal province.

However, the Grosch find has established C. ranzanii as a distinct species occurring in Mozambique, P.E. Africa, which attains a length of 204 mm. (about eight inches).

This note has been compiled in the interests of those of our Members who receive shells from Mozambique, and occasionally get an opportunity to visit Portuguese territory and do some collecting.

The writer wishes to express his gratitude to his very good friend, Mr. H. Boswell of Valhalla, Transvaal, for the copy of the illustrated American Museum Novitates from which this extract was taken.

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