



*Afrivoluta pringlei* Tomlin 1947

## THE STRANDLOPER

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### REPORT ON SHELLING TRIP TO MOCAMBIQUE

by G.A. Hyatt

After several shelling trips along the Mocambique coast, my wife and I came to the conclusion that far too many reefs, sandbanks, flats etc., were beyond reasonable walking distance from our hotels, camping sites etc., and that we needed some form of beach transport. Our thoughts veered from the usual idea of four-wheel drive vehicles after we had learnt of two instances of such vehicles being caught in soft sand and being lost to the sea. Eventually we decided to purchase two semi-folding motor-cycles.

We duly loaded these motor-cycles into our "bakkie" and trailer and set off to have a look at some of the inaccessible beaches to the north of Maxixe during the equinox tides at the end of September, 1973. The motor-cycles were highly successful in that our fuel consumption was extremely low in a high price area, and we were able to man-handle them across rocky projections onto the next beaches.

Although no beach was free of crude oil tar, we did not find any evidence of it having affected mollusc life. Over stretches totalling some seventy kilometres, the general scarcity of mollusc life seemed to be the result of stripping by local inhabitants and, in accessible places, by visitors. What however was unusual and in a sense alarming to our short experience, was an apparent disease which attacked all Cypraea caputserpentis and C. arabica arabica to be found on a reef about three to four hundred metres from the shore line and about three kilometres south of Morrungulo.

The effect of this apparent disease was to cover each shell with white blotches, often to the extent of obliterating most of the dorsal markings and patterns. Only live specimens having these blotches were found and it would seem that these not only survived the disease, but continued to live quite normally because every specimen we examined showed that the natural dorsal polish had been restored or maintained by the mantle.

Specimens of these two species found to the north and south of this reef showed no evidence of being affected by this disease. Similarly other species of Cypraea such as C. mappa, C. stolidia, C. helvola, C. felina and C. tigris found in the same area were quite normal.

Amongst our finds the following were the most interesting to us:

- 1) Three very fair beach specimens of Conus milno-edwardsi. They measured 122 mm, 95 mm and 77 mm.
- 2) A fair specimen of Magilus antiquus in early development although beach-worn.
- 3) An extremely beach-worn specimen of the Pterynotus genus of the Muricidae family. It would appear to be the species elongatus (Solander) - Reference Kira Plate 13 No. 13 of "Shells of the Western Pacific".
- 4) Several variations in patterns or markings of Conus textile.
- 5) Two beach-worn specimens of Conidae not yet identified by us.
- 6) A live specimen of Conidae not yet identified. When found it was thought to be C. lividus and the animal was not preserved. Its periostracum was identical to C. lividus in appearance.

Photographs of the species found and mentioned above have been taken and these may, where applicable, assist in identification.

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A NOTE ON MARGINELLA FLOCCATA SOWERBY, 1889

by F. Greave

In the Society's Circular No. 120, the late Mr. D.H. Kennelly mentioned that differences of opinion existed among members about this species. Sowerby gave the type locality as Port Elizabeth but Mr. Kennelly mentioned that he had never seen this shell in any collection.

In fact this shell does occur near Port Elizabeth. Shells fitting Sowerby's original description of M. floccata wash up at the few rather inaccessible beaches of the eastern part of Algoa Bay. Good specimens are scarce. The shell appears to live in deeper waters and many specimens reaching beaches are faded, a fact that was mentioned by Sowerby. M. floccata from that part of the Bay that have retained their colour, are indeed mottled grey and with a few interspersed tiny black brown specks. WHITE!

On the western (City) side of Algoa Bay the few M. floccata shells that I have found are more brownish, the colour fading even towards light brown with only an occasional black-brown spot. Towards Jeffreys Bay the shell appears to become even lighter in colour and shells washed up at this well known locality are usually mottled pink on a white underground. This Jeffreys Bay shell has been known, also named by Sowerby (see Circular No. 118), as Marginella nebulosa intermedia. A series of these shells shows that M. floccata and M. nebulosa intermedia are the same species.

Some Cape Town members informed me that, since the publication of Circular No. 120, M. floccata has been dredged at Simonstown. As Turton also mentions this shell from Port Alfred the range of M. floccata thus appears to be from False Bay to at least, Port Alfred.

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MEET LYMNAEA NATALENSISby M. Cortie

For about a year I have been keeping fresh water gastropods of the species Lymnaea natalensis in various trays, pill-boxes, tea-cups, Tupperware containers, aquariums etc. I have measured them, timed them, looked at them, bred them, fed them, and generally observed them to distraction.

On the Vaal, where the Barrage has dammed up the waters, numerous large patches of lilies grow in sheltered places. To find L. natalensis is merely a procedure of flipping over lily leaves. Only about one in fifteen leaves, on the average, yields a snail, but sometimes no snails can be found no matter how hard you look. Leaves with a moderately thick covering of green algae are more likely to yield specimens than very thickly forested leaves. Often the crescent shaped blobs of their eggs may be revealed. Other habitats in which I have found L. natalensis include concrete reservoirs on farms, concrete walls in bays on the Vaal and even on gently sloping sand about 100 mm underwater. The largest specimens which I have found came from the walls of a concrete farm dam. These measured about 20 mm. More normal sizes range from 8 to 15mm

The snails are easy to keep at home. All you need is a shallow tray filled with water from the place the snails came from with a few slimy leaves floating in it. Snails from all over adapt very happily to this environment. Merely put them on top of a leaf and they will find their own way about. When the snails have eaten one leaf clean just pop in another and leave them to find their own way to the new leaf. They will eat a wide range of vegetable matter and will even munch on mieliepap. L. natalensis may also be introduced to a fresh-water aquarium. Here, however, the walls must have a reasonable film of algae. Young and old alike will graze on decaying leaves of waterplants. When one wishes to take a specimen out for examination, I have found (to several snails' cost) that a gentle sliding pressure is better than to simply pluck it off.

Certain hazards overtake the snails while in captivity. In aquariums patrolling fish may knock them off the walls to the bottom. There they are often gulped down by the fish and you are left with an empty shell. Strangely enough, although they are fresh water gastropods, the snails may even drown. L. natalensis is a sort of scuba diver in that it carries its own bubble of air down with it. This air may last more than half an hour but ultimately the snail will come up for a refill. If, however, the snail is knocked off by a fish or weakened by rough handling it will fall down to the bottom and, not being able to replace its air bubble, it will drown. I have read that in highly oxygenated water L. natalensis may obtain oxygen from the water itself, but this does not appear to occur in either the Vaal or in the aquarium. Sometimes a drowning snail will recover if taken out into the air soon enough.

These gastropods journey relatively deep in pursuit of food. On vertical walls I have measured them down to a depth of half a metre. More commonly they stick around the 20 to 100 mm mark when feeding underwater on the vertical meadows of algae. Those living on the underneath of lily leaves rarely venture deeper than about 10 mm.

Surprisingly L. natalensis exhibits a variety of appearances. Specimens taken from lilies and concrete pilings in the Vaal are yellow-brown with golden spots showing through the translucent shells. Their feet are light brown. The jumbo specimens dwelling in some farm dams are, however, often dark grey in foot colour.

Specimens which I have found in cold, clear trout dams are very dark in colour. All snails which I have introduced to the aquarium darken slowly to dark grey. Possibly both temperature and diet causes this variation.

The snails seem to breed easily. Two or more kept together soon mate and deposit their jelly-like strips of eggs. In the aquarium I have found these egg strips up to 80 mm below the surface, glued to the glass. The eggs hatch after about 20 days. Anything up to about twenty tiny young hatch and crawl to the surface where they feed at or just below the water level. As they become bigger, bolder and more stupid, they venture into the depths where they are picked off by my very voracious vlei-kurpers.

The scope for experiment is tremendous with regard to fresh-water mollusca. I have described some observations on one species, L. natalensis, but many more species, both pelecypoda and gastropoda, live peaceful lives, generally unmolested by conchologists and students ..... Their time will come!

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Exchanges Wanted:-

Mr L.P. Burnay, Rua Direita No. 3, Paco do Lumiar, Lisboa 5, Portugal. Is interested in exchanging with members of our Society.

Mr F. Nolf, Nieuwpoortsteenweg 56, B-8400 Oostende, Belgium. Can offer North Sea, East Atlantic, Mediterranean, Canary Island and West African shells with full data in exchange for South African shells with full data.

Mrs W.R. Hunt, 10 Coltman Rd., Mount Pleasant, Salisbury, Rhodesia. Would like to exchange shells and views with other members.

Mr J. Eugenie, 44 les Carbets, Raizet (Abyes), 97110 Guadeloupe, French West Indies. Would like to exchange Caribbean and World wide shells for South African species.

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Change of Address:

Mrs J.M. Muller, 16 Lords Avenue, Robindale, Randburg, 2001.

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New Members:

Mrs J.A. Scheepers, 507 Uniondale, 40 Celliers St., Sunnyside, Pretoria, 0002.

Dr. C.H. Driessen, P.O. Box 916, Brits, 0250.

Mr. A.G. Driessen, Annalaan 33, Annlin, Pretoria, 0002.

Mrs W.R. Hunt, 10 Coltman Rd., Mount Pleasant, Salisbury, Rhodesia.

Dr. P.M. Arnaud, Station Marine D'Endoume, 13007 Marseille, France.

Mr B.O. Lafferty, 1314, Kensington, North Ridge Rd., Durban, 4001.

Mrs. P. Moed, 42, Cecil Avenue, Melrose, Johannesburg, 2001.

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Around the Groups:

Transvaal Group, Johannesburg. Our Annual General Meeting was held on the 7th June, 1974. Thirteen members and four visitors were present. Dr. van Hoepen opened the meeting and in his address it was important that we should seek closer ties with the

universities and also with societies with common interests. More effort should be made to gain new members. He thanked the members for their support during his term of office, and in particular the members of the committee. He also thanked Prof. Schoombie of R.A.U. for allowing the use of the Senate Hall for our meetings.

The Secretary then presented a report on the activities of the Group during the year: Membership. The membership in the Transvaal, excluding the newly formed Pretoria Group, now totals 46. There were 4 resignations, 4 who were removed from the Society's membership list due to non-payment of subscriptions, and one who has left Johannesburg for Port Alfred - (We miss you, Mrs. Evans!). We have during this time gained 4 new members. Group Activities. Ten meetings were held during the year. Two of these were film evenings, and on two occasions we were shown underwater slides of the islands in the vicinity of Porto Amelia, Mocambique, taken by Dr van Hoepen, and an underwater movie filmed in Kenya by Mrs. Hooper. Three meetings were devoted to talks on particular families of marine molluscs and two to talks on land snails. In the first of these we were privileged to be addressed by Prof. Schoombie. A talk was also given by Mr L.J. Smith of Pretoria on nature conservation, illustrated with colour slides showing animals in danger of extinction. In addition, there were several "reports-back" from members who had been away on shelling trips, and members had also described interesting observations on marine (and land) life. It is encouraging to note that since April last year five members of the Group had a total of nine articles published in the Strandloper. Congratulations in particular to Mr Allan Jenner on his article, "The Identity of *Conus spirogloxus*, Deshayes", originally published in the Journal De Conchyliologie, and to Mr Eddie Ralph, who, with his usual high standard of illustrations, continues to assist us in the identification of shells.

The Treasurer then read his report, after which nominations for Chairman and four committee members were called for. This year the members were asked to nominate the Chairman separately from the committee members. Voting proved unnecessary since the nomination for Chairman was returned unopposed, while five other members were nominated for the committee. The new Committee is as follows: Chairman - Mr A.H. Adam; Vice-Chairman - Dr E.H. van Hoepen; Secretary - Mrs A.H. Adam; Treasurer - Mr A.A. Polack; and Members - Mrs B. Hooper and Mr M. Lohr.

Mr Adam then took the Chair and thanked Dr van Hoepen and Mr Ruben for their unstinting efforts to sustain members' interests in all aspects of conchology. It was Mr Ruben who had so successfully organised our shell exhibition in 1971. The meeting closed after Dr van Hoepen had given a talk and shown slides of his recent visit to Malawi - in search of land snails, of course!

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Pretoria Group, Pretoria. With apologies from three members there was an attendance of eight at our meeting of 12th June. The shell display at the New Aquarium was discussed as also ways and means of obtaining films pertaining to the sea. A general discussion took place on books - what books to be used for what types of collection. Mrs Wilson brought along twelve books for those present to look at and discuss. Mr Zurich, because of his interest in the Muricidae, had in the meantime come across a very interesting book on this family in the form of a card catalogue covering 97 species plus black and white illustrations and data. Mrs Wilson had also received her set and it appears that similar card catalogues are available in respect of the Marginellidae and Mitridae.

It was decided that Cypraeidae would be discussed at the next meeting on 17th July at 8 p.m., "Pierneef Huis", Pretoria.

After the tea break a most interesting film on the Great Barrier Reef, kindly loaned by the Australian Embassy, was shown.

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Eastern Cape Group, Port Elizabeth. With apologies from two, there were 10 members and 5 visitors at our meeting of 8th June. As we had a full programme for the afternoon it was proposed that the minutes of the previous meeting be taken as read. It was reported that a bowl of flowers had been sent to Mrs C. Watters in appreciation of all she had done for the Group over the past few years. Mr McLachlan had arranged that the venue and programme of our meeting be broadcast over the Regional News, and there was also a short "write-up" in the Evening paper. This had resulted in the five visitors coming to the meeting. It was decided to combine our meeting in July with the erection of our stand at the "Hobbies Fair" as this meeting fell on the Saturday preceding the Fair.

Mr McLachlan reported that he had arranged to have guest speakers for each meeting to the end of the year, commencing with Mr de Villiers the Marine Biologist at the P.E. Museum who had spent some time on Gough Island, and had some very fine slides to show.

Members were then shown slides by Mrs Ball, Mrs Watters and Mr McLachlan, each commenting on their particular set of slides. After this most instructive and interesting show, tea was served and members discussed the families Strombidae and Amphiperatidae.

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Border Group, East London. An attendance of 14 was recorded at our meeting of 2nd June. With regard to the Annual General Meeting it was noted that more nominations for the Committee had been received than there were vacancies. As a result voting papers would be sent to all members of the Group. Dr Courtney-Latimer had been invited to address the meeting. It was also agreed that the Director of the East London Museum would be invited to the meeting.

It was reported that the Clifton School Mothers Group had requested a speaker and Mrs Latigan was to address them on Conchology on 16th July. Members were invited to take part and to illustrate the talk with their shells. The organisers of the Hobbies ~~Exposition~~ had invited the Group to display at very short notice, and with certain stipulations. Mrs Faulkner had undertaken to display her collection and had requested help in manning the stand. Those interested were asked to contact Mrs Faulkner.

The Chairman and Mr Quickelberge, biologist on the Museum staff, then judged the competition while Miss Eva took the Chair. The possibilities of a field trip to Jeffreys Bay and the ordering of plastic boxes were discussed.

After tea Mrs Latigan again took the Chair and the results of the competition were announced and Mr Quickelberge was thanked for his part in assisting with the judging. Mrs Brickhill's entry was awarded first place and second place was a tie between Miss Jackson and Mr Brickhill. The amount of hard work put in by members was most encouraging and the entries were of a very high standard. As a result of the impression created by all the displays it was felt that members should show this culmination of their years work at the Annual General Meeting.

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Natal Midlands Group, Pietermaritzburg. Our Annual General Meeting was held on 1st June. Mr Kilburn was re-elected Chairman, Mrs D. Cook Vice-Chairman and Mrs Webber Secretary. It was a very friendly meeting with general discussions all round. A short film on marine life was shown and we raised more money towards our library. The money raising method is that members donate shells. You then pay R1 and draw for order of pick of shell, i.e. No. 1 has first pick etc. In this way we each got a nice shell and the kitty was swelled. Best bit of shelling we have done this year!

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Minutes of a meeting of the Society held on 25th June, 1974.

Mrs Carlsson, who took the Chair in the absence of Mr Freeman, welcomed all present. Apologies were received from nine members.

The minutes of the previous meeting as published in The Strandloper No. 163, page 6, were taken as read and approved. Arising from these minutes the Secretary informed members that neither Mr Freeman nor Mr Kapp were available for re-election for the Council. Members were reminded that the closing date for nominations was 27th June.

Members were informed that subscriptions were now due and that the Treasurer was waiting with his receipt book.

Mr Carlsson told the meeting about two new booklets on shells he had obtained. The first was a 32 page booklet called "A Selection of South African Sea Shells" compiled by Mr Brian Kensley of the South African Museum and published by The Readers Digest Association on behalf of the South African Museum. The booklet contains such information as "What are sea shells", "Collecting sea shells", and "Collecting hints and guidelines" as well as numerous illustrations of shells many of which are in colour. It is understood that this booklet is to be distributed by the Readers Digest as one of their mystery prizes, but is also available from the South African Museum, Cape Town at 10 cents per copy. The second book was entitled "Tsitsikama Shore" by R.M. Tietz and Dr G.A. Robinson. This is a guide to the marine invertebrate fauna of the Tsitsikama Coastal National Park. The contents are those that appeared in the monthly magazine "Custos" which have now been condensed into book form. The book is bilingual and is illustrated with excellent colour photographs. 100 pages of information for R1-00 available from the National Parks Board, P.O. Box 787, Pretoria, bank exchange, postage and packing extra.

The shells on display, the Cymatium, were then discussed. Members attention was drawn to the series of articles by Mr Kilburn which were published in The Strandloper Nos. 132 to 135 and the illustrations of Cymatium in support of these articles which were published in The Strandloper No. 148.

Mr and Mrs Watt then entertained the meeting with some excellent slides of shell collecting in the Langebaan and Saldanha Bay areas of the West Coast. These slides showed the shells in their natural habitats, with animals extended and after cleaning. The cleaned shells of those depicted in the slides were on display. Mr and Mrs Watt are to be congratulated on this splendid show.

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