



THE
CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
OF
SOUTHERN AFRICA

Afrivoluta pringlei Tomlin 1947

CIRCULAR NO. 129

MAY 1971

The Range of Some South African Marine Shells

by the Late D. H. Kennelly.

In the following notes, the writer has attempted to produce a summary of the localities from whence certain species have been recorded. With the passage of time notes have appeared in various issues of our Circulars, and as a result the records of localities are greatly scattered.

The compiling of the information now given has entailed some months of recording and investigation, and the writer takes this opportunity of thanking various members of our Society, who have been ready and very willing to supply data. Without their assistance these notes could not have been written.

Sylvanocochlis ancilla, Hanley, 1859.

The type locality was originally quoted as the "Coast of the Ciskei", but today Port Elizabeth is accepted as being more correct. In addition specimens have been taken at Cape St. Francis (45 fathoms), Jeffreys Bay, Port Alfred (40 fathoms), Great Fish River, Gonubie, Kwelega and Bulugha. A deep sea dweller not often found in good condition on the beach. So far the localities of Jeffreys Bay and Gonubie have produced the largest number of specimens.

Latirus abnormis, Sowerby, 1894.

Type locality Natal. Other locality recordings are Zululand, Gonubie and Kidds Beach (East London). The last mentioned locality is the furthest south this shell has been reported from.

There is a big gap between the coast of Natal and the coast of the Ciskei, but in all probability rough weather and the keenness of our collectors will produce further records in time.

Fusus africanus, Sowerby, 1897.

Type locality Port Elizabeth. Also recorded from Port Alfred, Igoda, Sunrise-on-Sea, Yellow Sands (Bulugha), Xora and Mgazana (Transkei) and Durban (ex Pisce). To date the largest number of reported specimens has been found at Sunrise-on-Sea. This is another deep sea dweller, but according to existing records

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the best specimens have been found on the coasts of the Ciskei and Transkei. The living shell has yet to be taken.

Vasum truncatum, Sowerby, 1892.

Type locality Port Elizabeth. Other recordings are Port Alfred, Nthlonyana (Transkei), Port St. Johns and from deep water off the Natal coast. The best specimens seen so far have been collected at the Transkei locality of Nthlonyana after heavy weather, but the living shell has yet to be discovered.

Volva volva, Linné, 1758.

A well known shell which ranges through the Pacific and Indian Oceans. A specimen was trawled off Morgan Bay. The range certainly appears to extend further south, for about a dozen or more good beach shells have been found at localities between Gonubie and Bulugha. Perhaps sooner or later the species will be found living off the Ciskei Coast.

Cypraea capensis, Gray, 1828.

Type locality Port Elizabeth. A note on the first page of Circular No. 125 reports the discovery of a fine beach specimen at Jeffreys Bay. This is something which warrants further investigation, as - so far as the writer knows - it may constitute a new record of locality for the species.

Confirmation of the locality and the identity of the shell is desirable. Members should be on the look out for further examples, and report their finds in order to confirm this possible extension of range.

These notes should not be taken as a complete record - the writer has merely given the known data, and other localities may have been overlooked. However it is felt that our members now have some guide as to where to look for specimens of the species detailed above.

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Editors Note:

Cypraea capensis, Gray 1828. The member who reported the finding of this shell recorded in Circular No. 125 is well known and I have no doubt as to the identification and locality reported.

Vasum truncatum, Sowerby, 1892. In an article "Deep-water shell collecting" by D. Smith published on page 3 of Circular No. 126, we recorded the finding of a live shell off the Natal Coast.

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Shell Collecting in Southern Spain.

by Phillip W. Clover.

During my two years in Spain I have collected from Huelva, the famous port where many ships left to explore the New World in the sixteenth century, to Valencia well into the Mediterranean Sea. As we live near Cadiz most of the shells I have found are

from this area, as one can only drive so far to catch a low tide. Skin diving is quite cold here and visibility is never over three to six metres so most collecting is done on reefs at low tide.

Southern Spain does have some of the finest clear weather I have seen anywhere in the world and most of the reefs are void of people except near the towns and during the summer tourist season. One can walk by 3000 years of history in Cadiz and even find shells on the walls of a sunken Phoenician city in this area. So re-

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regardless of what shells are found an outing to the beaches and reefs is always enjoyed.

Usually we collect only 10 - 20 different species in any area, except Playa De Costilla in Rota Bay five miles across from Cadiz. This bay is blessed?? with all the towns garbage, and while I would hate to swim here, the shells seem to love it. About 450 metres off shore is a very large reef that is only exposed during the lowest of tides, a normal low tide being 0,6 - 0,9 metres.

On one recent collecting trip at Playa De Costilla I found 51 different species as no real low tides had uncovered this reef in three months. It seemed like half the town's population realised this also and were out on the reef looking for species of bivalves to eat. Close to shore in mud banks they dig out Pholas dactylus Linn, and the collector soon looks like the mud bank as it is messy work. Out towards the reef in gravel/mud/weed banks are dug Cardium edules Linnè, Mactra sugosa Chem., Lutraria elliptica Lam., and Tapes decussatus Linnè. These bivalves are collected by the bucket full and sold in the local markets. On the reef itself I find most of the rocks turned over for me as the Spaniards are looking for squid and sea urchins. As the low tides run in a three day cycle it is hopeless to turn them back as they will just be turned each day and maybe 50% will end up in their original positions. As no one else is looking for small specimen shells its a real field day for me and some of the more interesting species found are: Calliostoma zizphinum Linnè, Columbella rustica Linnè, Conus mediterraneus Linnè, Cypraea pyrum Gmel., Chiton olivaceus Spen Fusus rostratus Oliv., Fissurella graeca Linnè, Mitra ebemus Lam., Murex blainvillei Payr., Murex trunculus Linnè, Nassarius reticulata Linnè, Natica vittata Gmel., Ocenebra edwardsi Payr., and Ocenebra erinacea Payr.

Another form of shell collecting here in Spain is meeting the fishing boats as they return from trawling off the fishing grounds, "La Caballa" south west of Cadiz city, in 35 - 75 metres. As the fishermen pull their nets up on the pier, I often pick out Cymbium olla Linnè, Murex brandaris Linnè, Halia priamus Gmel., and Cassis saburon Brug. Some years ago they used to collect Cypraea achatidea Sow. in their nets also, but the style of nets and trawling methods has changed with the result that the C. achatidea is no longer collected sad to say, as its very popular with collectors.

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Some Further Comments on Thais Cingulata, Linnè, 1771

by L. Kapp.

I would like to record the finding of two five-banded specimens at Mouille Point, Table Bay, during the last week of February, 1971. Both were adult shells in excellent condition measuring 30,2 x 18,8 mm and 25,0 x 17,2 mm. They were collected in 0,6 metres of water, feeding on Chloromytilus crenatus, Lamarck.

Further to the previous article on distribution (Circular No. 126, page 4) I collected 42 specimens in May, 1970 at the Royal Cape Yacht Club jetty in Table Bay docks. The seabed there is some 10 to 15 cm. deep in oily sludge, so all life is confined to protruding objects and I cannot see how the animals could move from one point to another. The shells were generally in poor condition, being heavily encrusted with growths of worm and barnacles. Egg cases were numerous. The surprising point was

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that I collected only 1 four-banded shell, 2 three-banded, 2 two-banded and the remainder were about evenly divided between one-banded and unbanded specimens. This is undoubtedly the largest concentration of one and unbanded specimens I have seen anywhere.

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MEETINGS:-

The next meeting of the SOCIETY will be held on Tuesday, 25th May, 1971 in the Lecture Hall of the S.A. Museum, at 8.15 p.m. The shells for display and discussion will be Plates 1 to 6 of Marine Shells of Southern Africa by D.H. Kennelly. We also want to discuss shell photography, so bring your equipment and slides.

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The next meeting of the TRANSVAAL GROUP will be held on Friday, 28th May, 1971 in the Theatre Hall of Shell House, Johannesburg at 8 p.m.

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The next meeting of the NATAL MIDLANDS GROUP will be held on Saturday, 5th June, 1971 at the Natal Museum, Pietermaritzberg at 2.30 p.m. This meeting will be our Annual General Meeting and films will be shown.

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The next meeting of the BORDER GROUP will be held on Sunday, 23rd May, 1971 in the Lecture Hall of the East London Museum at 3 p.m.

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The next meeting of the EASTERN CAPE GROUP will be held on Saturday, 5th June, 1971 at 4 Molsonder Mansions, 10th Avenue, Summerstrand at 2.30 p.m.

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News from the Eastern Cape.

Seven members were present at our February meeting. We all felt rather sad, having just heard of the passing of a dear and helpful friend, Mr. Kennelly. Those present stood in silent remembrance.

Haliotidae was our family for study. Although not a large one there was plenty to discuss. Discoveries of interest from our P.E. coast being:-

A fairly good beach specimen (slightly barnacle encrusted) of H. queketti, Smith, 1910, measuring 34 mm. found at Summerstrand on 20/6/65 by C.M. Watters, and one wonders if this is an extension of the known range to the south?

Also at Summerstrand - H. Kraussi, Turton, 1932, of 50 mm. by C.M. Watters. Mrs. Hoogenhout also has one in her collection from Jeffreys Bay. No live ones as yet!

From further afield:-

H. queketti, Smith, 1910, beach from Xora by Mrs. J.C. Dawson.
H. speciosa, Reeve, 1846, beach from Morgan Bay by Mrs. Watters.
Mrs. Dawson displayed a most interesting box of foreign shells, among them H. asinina, Linné.

With reference to the late D.H. Kennelly's notes on Ficus subintermedius, d'Orbigny, (Circular 125, page 5.) Mrs. Dawson exhibited two beach specimens found at Umkomaas in June, 1969. The apex in both shells being broken.

Although/.....

Although there were only four at our March get-together there was plenty of enthusiasm. We spent a very interesting time discussing the Neritidae family.

To date only live N. albicilla, Linné, have been found by this group on the P.E. coast. Mrs. Bereth holds the 'record' for the most southerly point for this species having found them live at Sardinia Bay, P.E. and a beach specimen at Jeffreys Bay. An interesting discovery was an almost black specimen measuring 24 mm. taken live in the Zwartkops River, on the wall at the Yacht Club slipway, on 21st February, 1971, by Mrs. Watters. The tide was very low at the time and the Yacht Club is about 1½ miles from the sea.

Other shells on display were N. polita, Linné, 15 mm. and 29 mm., both beach specimens collected at Summerstrand. Live taken N. plexa, Chemn., of 34 mm. from Park Rynie and a beach N. undata, Linné from Paradise Island as well as live N. plicata, Linné, from Xora and Silver Bay (Transkei).

Mrs. Dawson brought her box of Foreign Neritidae and it was very interesting to compare these with our South African shells.

We wished Peggy Beuster a happy birthday in song! Enjoyed some apple tart and cream with our tea (poor waistlines!!). The end to a most enjoyable afternoon.

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Editor's Note.

Haliotis kraussi, Turton, 1932, is a synonym of Haliotis parva, Linné, 1758. (Ref. Barnard, K.H., Annal S.A. Mus., Vol XLVII, Pt. II, Cont. to the Knowledge of S.A. Marine Mollusca. 1963.)

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News from the Border.

As a special project for this year we are building up our own reference collection, including some of the growth series begun last year. In the absence of a Conchologist at the Museum this should help, especially our new members, in identifying and classifying shells into their correct families.

Such was the enthusiasm over the four boxes displayed to initiate the scheme, that it took some time before the 'meeting proper' could begin. Adeline Gilmer brought before members the suggestion that we should have a week-end "seafari" to co-incide with the April meeting, as the tides would be low during that weekend. Mrs. Armstrong promptly invited us to their home at Bulugha, and six members accepted the invitation, the rest agreeing to spend as much time as possible with the Group on Saturday and then gather for a meeting at Bulugha on the Sunday.

Special "finds". Mrs. Sylvia Vowles exhibited a large sinistral Marginella ornata, Redfield, 1870, found on the beach at Gonubie. Mrs. Armstrong's "mystery shell", mentioned in Circular No. 127, page 4, has been identified as Lophiotoma indica, Röding. This is a deep water shell, so far trawled only on the Natal Coast, and is the first known beach specimen to be found. It came from Yellowsands.

Further excitement was caused by Peggy Faulkner producing a jig-saw of broken pieces of an adult chambered Nautilus (Nautilus pompilius)

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found at Xora, Transkei. Unfortunately the "locals" (presumably) had stoned the creature, which must have washed up alive, and the shell was badly smashed. This is further evidence of the destruction of valuable marine life on this interesting part of our coastline. Peggy also found a juvenile *Cassis rufa* in good condition.

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Annual General Meeting.

The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on Tuesday, 24th August, 1971, and nominations for Council, in writing, are hereby called for, to reach the Secretary NOT LATER THAN 24th JUNE, 1971. The present Council is as follows:

- President Vacant
- Vice-President Mr. D. Freeman
- Secretary Mrs R.O. Carlsson
- Treasurer Mr. R.O. Carlsson
- Members Mrs.M.C. Giles
Mrs.L. Kerr
Mr. M.C. Giles
Mr. L. Kapp
Prof. J. Mallory (co-opted during year)

With the exception of the Secretary and the Treasurer, the term of office of all other Council members has expired. Nominations are therefore required for the positions of President, Vice-President and five Members. In terms of Clause 6 (a) (i) of the Constitution these Council Members should be resident in Cape Town or the immediate vicinity.

Will members please send in their nominations to the Secretary as soon as possible, making sure that the nominee agrees to the nomination.

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Minutes of the meeting held at the S.A. Museum - 27th April, 1971.

Mr. Freeman, in the Chair, welcomed members and friends. Apologies were received from Prof. and Mrs. Mallory, Miss Bustin, Mr. M. Wright, Mrs. Gaynham, Mrs. Ackermann and Mrs. Pugsley.

The Minutes of the previous meeting, as published in Circular No. 128, were taken as read and confirmed.

The Secretary announced that the Society had bought a limited supply of:-

- 1) Sea Shells of the World by R. Tucker Abbot
- 2) Sea Shells of North America by R. Tucker Abbot, and
- 3) A Preliminary List of South African Marine Shells from False Bay to the Pondoland/Natal Border by D.H. Kennelly. (Published 1963)

A very brisk trade followed and all copies were sold. If country members are interested further copies can be obtained. The costs are R1-20, R3-50 and 30 cents respectively.

Mr. Freeman informed the meeting that he had seen a copy of a Dealer's catalogue from Thomas C. Rice. This catalogue was very comprehensive and covered many families and shells not previously listed. It would, therefore, be of value to those members who were interested in attaching a value to their shells.

There/.....

There being no further business to discuss a very enjoyable time was had by all studying the shells on display and hearing something about the family Terebridae. Much interesting information came to light during the discussions and all left the meeting knowing a little more about the habits etc. of these attractive shells.

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Members.

Please add the following name to the list of members sent to you during February.

1966. Mr. A Musetti, P. 270, Bacone 2, 20129 Milano, Italy.

The following have been elected to membership.

Miss E.J. Meyer, 162 Fordyce Road, Walmer, Port Elizabeth.

Mrs. H. Spurgeon, P.O. Ramsgate, Natal.

Mr. P. Piani, via Delle Fragole 23, 40137 Bologna, Italy.

Mr. & Mrs. J.W. Watt, 'Melrose', Station Road, Rondebosch, Cape.

Mr. R.I. Gentle, Tammarisque Cottage, Mountain Street, Hout Bay.

Mr. A.H. Adam, 37 Newport Road, Parkwood, Johannesburg.

Mrs. P.A. Prentice, 19 Ashford Road, Parkwood, Johannesburg.

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A Plea to all Members.

Editor he say, "You no write articles, me no publish Circular."

A big thank you to all who have contributed articles in the past, but my supply of articles has now reached an all time low, in fact at the moment there is only one article on hand for publication next month, and that by an overseas member.

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Family MITRIDAE

The members of this family on our shores are chiefly small shells. In the Pacific Ocean they are much larger. The shell is spindle-shaped, rather thick and solid, with a pointed spire. The aperture is small, and there are distinct pleats on the columella.

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