



The Columbariinae of South Africa

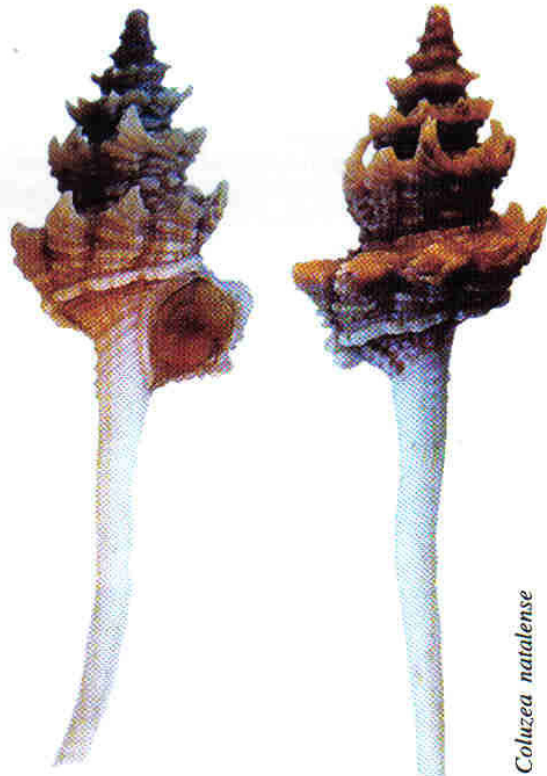
- Alwyn & Johan Marais

The subfamily Columbariinae comprises a relatively small group of mainly rare deepwater molluscs related to the Muricidae. Also known as 'Pagoda shells' they have a wide distribution, occurring from equatorial to polar latitudes. These molluscs inhabit muddy substrates along continental margins at depths of up to 3200m and feed on sipunculid and polychaete worms. The mollusc's long, slender proboscis with strong retractor muscles is ideally developed to extend down into the worm tubes and to extract its prey. Many specimens show repaired breaks, suggesting that they in turn, are preyed upon by crabs. The South African coast contains one of the richest Columbariinae faunas known at present. Currently there are nearly fifty known species worldwide, eight of which occur in South African waters.

The position of the subfamily has been in a state of flux with many authors placing it in the family Vasidae, while others place it in the Columbariidae or even the Fasciolaridae. These molluscs were recently placed in the family Turbinellidae because of common anatomical features such as a long narrow proboscis, a small radula and an open or partially fused sperm groove.

Because of the great depths most species inhabit, they have only been discovered since the advent of deep-sea trawling and dredging. During its voyage around the world, the deep-sea research vessel H.M.S. *Challenger* visited the Cape in 1872. In addition to the shallow-water dredging conducted in Simon's Bay, two deep hauls were made SE of Cape Point in 180-275m. This material gave rise to the first species described from South Africa by the British worker R. Boog Watson, *Columbarium radiale* Watson, 1882. Subsequently a second species, trawled off Cape Natal by shrimp trawl, was described as *Columbarium subcontractum* Sowerby, 1902. The Cape Government conducted a detailed survey (1897-1900) of Cape waters from St. Helena Bay to East London, using the steam trawler *Pieter Faure* to establish suitable commercial trawling grounds. The *Pieter Faure* also conducted a similar survey in Natal waters during 1900-1901.

Although trawling was generally limited to depths of less than 460m, a number of interesting deep hauls were made SE of Cape Point and off East London and Natal. At the time no detailed sorting of molluscan samples was done and specimens remained in storage until the collection was transferred to the South African Museum in 1910. Eventually



Coluzea natalense

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material was sent to the British malacologist J.R. le Brocton Tomlin who described *Columbarium natalense* Tomlin, 1928 from off Durban and *Columbarium formosissimum* Tomlin, 1928 from off Durban and several localities in the Cape. The dredged material yielded two further species from off Cape Point, later described by K.H. Barnard of the South African Museum as *Columbarium angulare* Barnard, 1959 and *Columbarium rotundum* Barnard, 1959. The most common South African species, *Columbarium eastwoodae* Kilburn, 1971, was initially trawled off southern Mozambique and described by R.N. Kilburn of the Natal Museum. The type locality of the most recently described species, *Coluzea juliae* Harasewych, 1989, is off Inhaca Island, Mozambique, but this species also occurs off Natal. Most South African species are now attributed to the genus *Coluzea*.

The shells are narrowly spindle-shaped with a high spire and a long, thin siphonal canal. The whorls may be convex or angulate (with an angular ridge or keel) at the widest part of the whorl (periphery). The whorls have broadly rounded ribs in line with the long axis of the shell (axial ribs), forming weak rounded nodules or spines on the peripheral keel. The spiral sculpture varies from fine ridges (spiral threads or lirae) in some species, to broad spiral cords in others. The groove formed where two adjacent whorls meet (suture) may be straight or wavy (undulate). The shells are often white in colour with a horny, pear-shaped operculum. South African species can

be identified on their axial and spiral sculpture alone, despite the fact that these features vary from early to later whorls.

***Coluzea eastwoodae* (Kilburn, 1971)**

Profile angulate, slightly concave above periphery, periphery below mid-whorl on later whorls; suture strongly undulate; Axial sculpture from suture to suture on early whorls, end in 18-19 slightly recurved, scaly spines of varying lengths on the periphery of later whorls, axial ribs stronger below than above periphery; spiral threads fine, becoming obsolete on slope above periphery, except for 7-8 weak threads just above peripheral keel, 5-6 spiral threads below periphery, base of body whorl with 1-2 strong spiral cords; colour white.

Locality: Type locality off southern Mozambique, but common off Natal north of Durban; 300-600m.

***Coluzea subcontractum* (Sowerby, 1902)**

Profile angulate, periphery below mid-whorl; suture slightly undulate; axial sculpture limited to 9-10 slightly raised ribs directly above and below peripheral keel of mature whorls, more prominent below keel, end in flat, angular, tooth-like tubercles; spiral sculpture, fine closely-spaced threads of unequal strength, 11-12 above and 7-8 below periphery of later whorls; colour white.

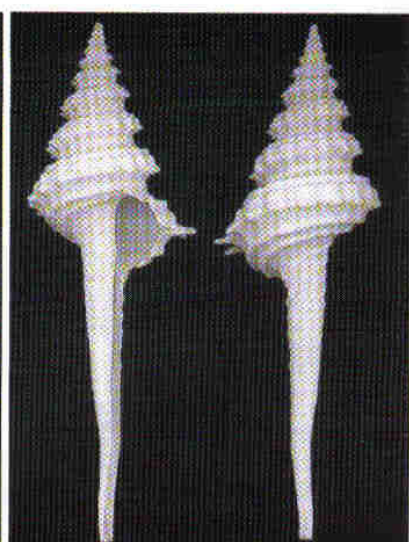
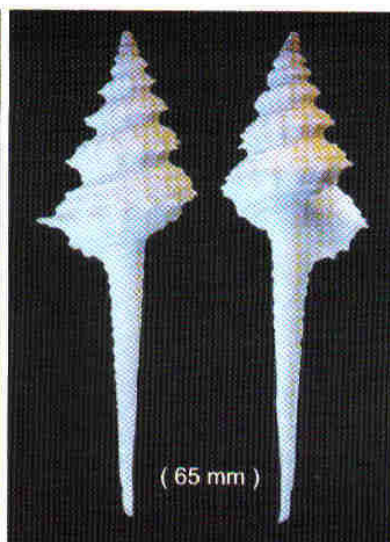
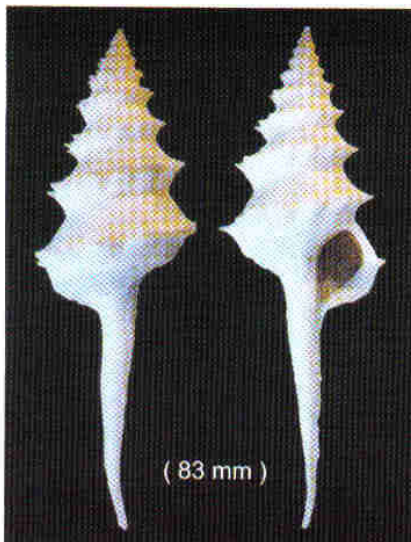
Locality: Off Durban to Kosi Bay; 370m.



Note: Can be distinguished from *C. eastwoodae* by the fine spiral threads covering the entire whorl.

Top:
Coluzea subcontractum
Bottom:
Variations of *Coluzea eastwoodae*

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Christelle Deysel, P.O. Box 1855, Rooihuiskraal, 0152, South Africa
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· SECRETARY:

Kobie du Preez, P.O. Box 51694, Wierdapark, 0149, South Africa
 secretary@conch-sa.org.za Tel: H (012)-6602394

· EDITOR *STRANDLOPER*:

Kobie du Preez, P.O. Box 51694, Wierdapark, 0149, South Africa
 editor@conch-sa.org.za Tel: H (012)-6602394

REGIONAL CONTACT PERSONS:

BLOEMFONTEIN (Vrystaat Groep)

Ds. H. van der Walt, P.O. Box 25913, Langenhoven Park, 9300
 vrystaat@conch-sa.org.za (051)-4464244

CAPE TOWN

Mr V. Millard, P.O. Box 27208, Rhine Rd., Cape Town 8050.
 ctown@conch-sa.org.za (021)-614613

DURBAN (Group)

Rina Matthee, 30 Headingley Rd., Westville 3630.
 dbn@conch-sa.org.za (031)-2661795

EAST LONDON (Border Group)

Miss R.M. Tietz, 408 Kennaway Court, Inverleith Terrace, East London, 5201.
 border@conch-sa.org.za (043)-7437818

PIETERMARITZBURG (Group)

Dawn Brink, 2 Highfield Drive, Westville, 3630.
 pmburg@conch-sa.org.za (031)-2661404

PORT ELIZABETH (Group)

Louw Fouche, Nathanweg 30, Broadwood, Port Elizabeth, 6070. pe@conch-sa.org.za (041)-3675497

PRETORIA (Group)

Alwyn Marais, P.O. Box 870, Florida Hills, 1716
 pta@conch-sa.org.za 0825547578

SOUTHERN NATAL (Group)

Mr G. Wallace, P.O. Box 513, Port Shepstone 4240.
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- ed.



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Society news

Pectinidae News - Compiled by Markus Lussi

New species & sub-species

- ☞ - *Mirapecten tuberosus* Dijkstra & Kilburn, 2001
- ☞ - *Vepriclamys africana* Dijkstra & Kilburn, 2001
- ☞ - *Aequipecten commutatus peripheralis* Dijkstra & Kilburn, 2001

New synonyms & combinations

- ☞ - *Chlamys littvedii* Wagner, 1984 = *Laevichlamys lemniscata* (Reeve, 1853)
- ☞ - *Chlamys gilchristi* Sowerby, 1904 = *Pseudamussium gilchristi* (Sowerby, 1904)
- ☞ - *Chlamys weberi* Bavay, 1904 = *Laevichlamys weberi* (Bavay, 1904)
- ☞ - *Pecten cosuscans* Hinds, 1845 = *Semipallium cosuscans* (Hinds, 1904)
- ☞ - *Chlamys humilis* Sowerby, 1904 = *Talochlamys humilis* (Sowerby, 1904)
- ☞ - *Ostrea multistriata* Poli, 1795 = *Talochlamys multistriata* (Poli, 1795)

New records for South Africa

- ☞ - *Delectopecten murostomi* Poutiers, 1981
- ☞ - *Anguipecten picturatus* Dijkstra, 1995
- ☞ - *Decatopecten amiculum* (Philippi, 1851)
- ☞ - *Juxtomusium maldivense* (Smith, 1903)
- ☞ - *Laevichlamys deliciosa* (Iredale, 1939)
- ☞ - *Pedum spondyloideum* (Gmelin, 1791)
- ☞ - *Semipallium crouchi* (Smith, 1892)
- ☞ - *Semipallium favicans* (Linnaeus, 1758)
- ☞ - *Haumea minuta* (Linnaeus, 1758)

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Ed.

BY THE SEASHORE

- *R.A Lafferty*

A light-hearted Science-fiction story from: *The Best from Galaxy – Volume II 1974*

Send in by Jelle Lammers*

The most important event in the life of Oliver Murex was his finding of a seashell when he was four years old. It was a bright and shining shell that the dull little boy found. It was bigger than his own head (and little Oliver had an unusually large head), and had two eyes peering out of its mantle cavity that were brighter and more intelligent-seeming than Oliver's own. Both Oliver and the shell had these deep, black, shiny eyes that were either mockingly lively or completely dead – with such shiny, black things it was hard to say which.

That big shell was surely the brightest thing on that sunny morning beach and no one could have missed it. But George, Hector, August, Mary, Catherine and Helen had all of them missed it and they were older and sharper-eyed than was Oliver. They had been looking for bright shells, going in a close skirmish line over that sand and little Oliver had been trailing them with absent mind and absent eyes.

"Why do you pick up all the dumb little ones and leave the good big one?" he yipped from their rear. They turned and saw the shell and they were stunned. It actually was stunning in appearance – why hadn't they seen it? (It had first to be seen by one in total sympathy with it. Then it could be seen by any superior person.)

"I wouldn't have seen it either if it hadn't whistled at me," Oliver said.

"It's a Hebrew Volute," George cried out, "and they are not even found in this part of the world."

"It isn't. It is a Music Volute," Mary contradicted.

"I think it is a Neptunes Volute," Hector hazarded.

"I wish I could say that it's a Helen Volute," Helen said, "but it isn't. It's not a Volute at all. It's a Cone, an Alphabet Cone."

Now these were the silliest kids along the seashore that summer and they should have known a Volute form a Cone, all except little Oliver. How could there be such

wide differences among them?

"Helen is right about its being a Cone," August said. "But it isn't an Alphabet Cone. It's a Barthelemy Cone, a big none."

"It's a Prince Cone," Catherine said simply. But they were all wring. It was a deadly Geography Cone, even though it was three times too big to be one. How could such sharp-eyed children not recognize such an almost legendary prize?

Oliver kept this cone shell with him all the years of his growing up. He listened often to the distant sounding in it, as people have always listened to seashells. No cone, however, is a real ocean-roarer of a shell. They haven't the far crash; they haven't the boom. They are not shaped for it, not like a Conch, not like a Vase Shell, not like a Scallop, not even the common Cowries or Clam Shells or Helmet Shells. Cones make rather intermittent, sharp sounds, not really distant. They tick rather than roar.

"Other shells roar their message from way off," Helen said once. "Cones telegraph theirs." And the clicking, ticking of Cones does sound somewhat like the chatter of a telegraph.

Some small boys have toy pandas or bears. But Oliver Murex had this big seashell for his friend and toy and security. He slept with it – he carried it with him always. He depended on it. If he was asked a question he would first hold the big cone shell to his ear and listen – then he would answer the question intelligently. But if for any reason he did not have his shell near at hand he seemed incapable of an intelligent answer on any subject.

There would sometimes be a splatter of small blotched or dusty motes on the floor or table near the shell.

"Oh, let me clean those whatever-they-ares away," mother Murex said once when she was nozzling around with the cleaner.

"No, no – leave them alone – they'll go back in," Oliver

protested. "They just come out to get a little sunlight." And the little blotches, dust motes, fuzz, stains, whatever retreated into the shell of the big cone.

"Why they're alive!" the mother exclaimed.

"Isn't everybody?" Oliver asked.

"It is an Alphabet Cone just as I always said it was," Helen declared. "And those little skittering things are the letters of the different alphabets that fall off the outside of the shell. The cone has to swallow them again each time, and when it has digested them they will come through to the outside again where they can be seen in their patterns."

Helen still believed this was an Alphabet Cone. It wasn't. It was a deadly Geography Cone. The little blotches seemed to fall off it or to come out of it and run around – and that then had to be swallowed again – may have been little continents or seas coming from the Geography Cone; they may have been quite a number of different things. But if they were alphabets (well, they were those, among other things), then they were more highly complex alphabets than Helen suspected.

It isn't necessary that all children in a family be smart. Six smart ones out of seven isn't bad. The family could afford big-headed, queer-eyed Oliver, even if he seemed a bit retarded. He could get by most of the time. If he had his shell with him, he could get by all the time.

One year in grade school, though, they forbade him the company of his shell. And he failed every course abysmally.

"I see Oliver's problem as a lack of intelligence," his teacher told father Murex. "And lack of intelligence is usually found in the mind."

"I didn't expect it to be found in his feet," Oliver's father said. But he did get a psychologist in to go over his slow son from head to foot.

"He's a bit different from a schizo," the psychologist said when he had finished the examination. "What he has is two concentric personalities. We call them the core personality and the mantle personality – and there is separation between them. The mantle or outer personality is dull in Oliver's case. The core personality is bright enough, but it is able to contact the outer world only by means of some separate object. I believe that the

unconscious of Oliver is now located in this object and his intelligence is tied to it. That seashell is there, now, is quite well balanced mentally. It's too bad that it isn't a boy. Do you have any idea what object it is that Oliver is so attached to?"

"It's that seashell there, He's had it quite a while. Should I get rid of it?"

"That's up to you. Many fathers would say yes in such case; almost as many would say no. If you get rid of the shell the boy will die. But the problem will be solved – you'll no longer have a problem child."

Mr. Murex sighed, and he thought about it. He had decisions to make all day long and he disliked having to make them in the evening, too.

"I guess the answer is no," he finally said. "I'll keep the seashell and I'll also keep the boy. They're both good conversation pieces. Nobody else has anything that looks like either of them."

Really they had come to look alike, Oliver and his shell, both big-headed and bug-eyed and both of them has a quiet and listening air about them. Oliver did quite well in school after they had let him have the big seashell with him in class again.

A man was visiting in the Murex house one evening. This man was by hobby a conchologist or a student of seashells. He talked about shells. He set out some little shells that he had carried wrapped in his pocket and explained them. Then he noticed Oliver's big seashell and he almost ruptured a posterior adductor muscle.

"It's a Geography Cone!" he shrieked.

"A giant one! And it's alive!"

"I think it's an Alphabet Cone," Helen said.

"I think it's a Prince Cone," Catherine said.

"No, no, it's a Geography Cone and it's alive!"

"Oh, I've suspected for a long time that it was alive," Papa Murex said.

"But don't you understand? It's a giant specimen of the deadly Geography Cone"

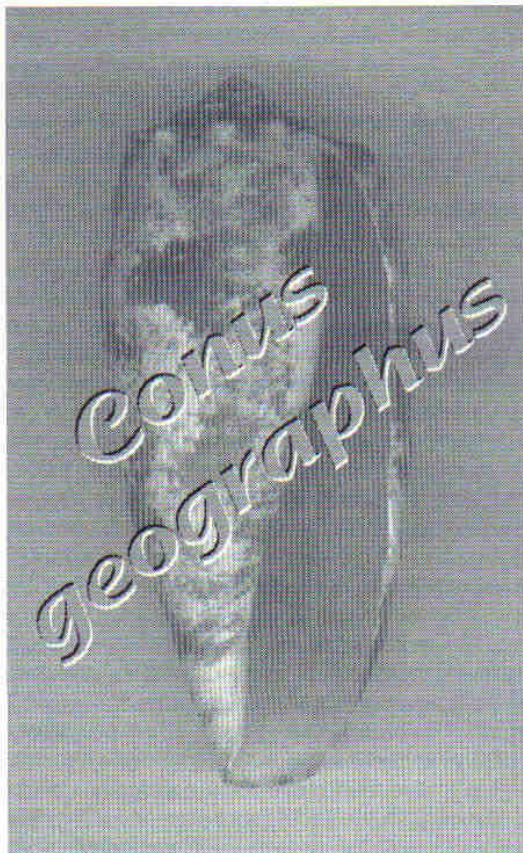
"Yes, I think so. Nobody else has one," father Murex said.

"What to you keep it in?" the conchologist chattered.

"What do you feed it?"

"Oh, it has total freedom here, but it doesn't move around very much. We don't feed it anything at all. It belongs to

my son Oliver. He puts it to his ear and listens to it often.”
 “Great galloping gastropods, man! It’s likely to take an ear clear off the boy.”
 “It never has.”
 “But it’s deadly poisonous. People have died of its sting.”
 “I don’t believe any one of my family ever has. I’ll ask my wife. Oh no, I needn’t. I’m sure none of my family has ever died of it’s sting. I just remembered that none of them has ever died at all.



The man with the hobby of conchology didn’t visit the Murex house very much after that.

An off-world person of another great and rich family came to call on Mr. Murex at his home. “That is a fine specimen,” the visiting person said. “Fine. He could almost be from back home.”

“He is my son Oliver,” said Mr. Murex, quite pleased.
 “And his friend there,” the visitor continued, “I swear that he is from back home.”
 “There’s a misunderstanding,” Mr. Murex said. “The other

one there is a seashell.”

“What is a seashell?” the visitor asked. “Are earth seas hatched out of shells? How odd. But you are mistaken, person Murex. That is a specimen form back home. Do you have the papers on him?”

“I don’t know of any papers. What would such papers indicate?”

“Oh, that you have given fair exchange for the specimen. We wouldn’t want an interworld conflict over such a small matter, would we?” “If you would let me know what this ‘fair exchange’ is” Murex tried to comply. “Oh, I will let you know at the time of my leaving.”

Oliver sat on the shore of the Sea of Moyle in the far, far north. This was not in the cold, far north. It was on a warm sunny beach in the off-world far north. And Oliver sat there as if he belonged.

There hadn’t been any space-change in Oliver. There had been only the slow change through all the years of his life and that was never a great alteration – a great difference hadn’t been needed in him.

Oliver was bright and shinning, the brightest thing on that sunny morning beach. He had his big head and his little body. He had two shiny black eyes peering out of his mantle cavity. Oliver was very much a seashell now, a special and prized shell.

Six sharp-eyed children of the dominant local species were going in close skirmish over that sunny sand and a smaller seventh child trailed them with absent mind and absent eyes. The big moon had already gone down; the little moon still hung low in the sky like a silver coin. And the sun was an overpowering gold.

The sharp-eyed children were looking for bright shore specimens and they were finding them, too. And right ahead of them was that almost legendary prize, a rare Oliver Cone.

* Jelle Lammers
 143 Bayley str.
 Farramere
 Benoni
 1501
 South Africa

The Smiles and Trials of Shell Collecting.

- Zvi Orlin *

I have often been asked how and why I started collecting shells. Well, I have always been a lover of nature, observing the flora and fauna and natural phenomena of my surroundings.



I started collecting snakes and other reptiles, then added bird-watching to my activities, and after studying vulcanology, started seeking out volcanoes. My favourite pastime is hiking, which opens up new vistas and avenues of interest. During the course of these hikes, which since I went on pension, has been with two close friends, we walked the shores of our country during the rainy season, when the surrounding mountains were rather muddy. Along the beaches after storms, I noticed a large variety of species of molluscs. The fascinating forms and colors of the shells, were a great joy to me: they seemed to be the epitome of the ability in nature, to enable the creation and development of variable and beautiful living creatures. After collecting them, I of course tried my hand at identification. This set me on the road to shell collecting. I started checking my classifications, with the help of available literature on Israeli shells, and with the local Universities, which have accumulated impressive collections, and whose staff have the expertise to assist me in my determinations.

I have only been collecting for a decade, but feel it is now time to look back and assess my experience. I suppose that for serious study, and the accumulation of knowledge, one can always be assisted by a mentor, and in my case it was Henk Mienis, the Curator of the National Mollusc Collection of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He gave me great encouragement, and was always on hand to check my determinations, and assist in all possible ways to further my advancement.

I consider the greatest joys of shell collecting are searching the beaches, wading in the shallows, snorkelling and scuba diving, all of which help us observe, find and familiarise ourselves with habitats and their residents, and then classifying the species found, and learning of their distribution. Each of us derives his pleasures differently. At first our joys are from finding specimens new to our collections; then we try to improve the standard, by finding finer specimens, more beautiful or larger. One of our greatest joys is finding species that have not been found previously in our region. I once found a specimen, on our

Mediterranean shore, of an Indo-Pacific *Strombus*. At first it was thought to be a Lessepsian migrant, (from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean), but as no other specimen has since been found, this seems unlikely. Probably it was only a vagrant or occasional, maybe just brought by man, perhaps in his boats or ships? The ultimate joy is of course finding a species new to science, but few of us achieve this goal. The easiest way of doing so, is by collecting beach or substrate grit, in which many new microshells are found, as they have been insufficiently studied till recently.

When we have found most of the accessible species, in our respective areas, then we look further afield. We can then either exchange shells with collectors of other regions, or travel overseas and search ourselves. I find both venues bring me a wealth of excitement and joy!

We suddenly discover that a family or genus, that we thought we know, has many additional species in other regions, and new fields of information and knowledge are opened up to us. Some contacts we make in exchanges, are what I call gems: they are always reliable in careful packing and prompt dispatch, and if they consider some of our determinations of species questionable, they offer alternative suggestions, which we can check. Others are not so obliging and return the shells, which is a blow to our pride. Occasionally we receive in exchange species which were not requested, but these cases are rare.

My most memorable meeting was with Arie Jooste, from Aston Bay in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. (I visited him at the instigation of the well known conchologist, Victor Millard from Cape Town). He and his son have a boat, and they dredge and scuba dive, and are renowned for the rare shells they have found, and have a very fine collection. Despite many medical problems, he was a smiling, friendly and generous collector, who enjoyed giving, and also helping people. He gave me a few dozen uncommon and rare shells, which I was lacking in my collection, although I told him that I had nothing at the level of their valuable specimens, to offer in exchange. I sent him some specimens from my collection, and a book, but I still feel indebted to him till this day. What a fine and rare man!!!!

I have lately also made contact with several other collectors, who only collect local shells from their country, hence were not interested in exchanging shells, however they offered to send me duplicates of dozens of shells from their collections, without requesting anything in return. As one colleague expressed it: Other collectors have been kind to me in the past, so what goes around, comes around! Such wonderful people are from New Zealand, Australia and also

additional collectors from South Africa.

Like in all ventures, we are also confronted by trials, and the major one in our collecting is of course the correct identification of species. To accumulate sufficient literature to assist us is very expensive, and only in the course of time can we acquire the basic books needed. Some of the books and other literature we use, are outdated, with the resulting incorrect classifications. New Zealand has shown a classical example of how to deal with this problem: the popular book used there for many decades, was later updated, and now a Checklist has been published of all the New Zealand molluscs. Hopefully this procedure will be followed in other countries, as all the Monologues published, on certain families or groups of molluscs, are not always readily available to collectors. We need recourse to the University libraries, and sometimes to the internet, to assist us.

With the growth of our collections, we are faced by another trial: how to keep track of all the specimens in our collection. The only effective solution is computerization. To many of us older people, this is one of the greatest challenges: we have to become reasonably proficient in operating a computer. If successful, this is perhaps the highest stage we can achieve, and it enables us to draw information rapidly: lists of each country or region, and note which species are new to them, and check the data on any desired species.

An additional trial is how to get assistance in checking our classifications. Sometimes, when we approach professional scientists active in Malacology, we receive no response. This is very frustrating! We must remember, that for each professional there are probably dozens of amateurs, who can add invaluable information. No one has a monopoly on knowledge, and although most Monologues published add micro-information on our species, we also need to sum up the statistical information available. Checklists of various regions are useful macro-data, even if prepared by amateurs, and can stimulate research. Perhaps the best example of what can be achieved by amateur collectors, outside the circle of professional scientists, is that of Alfred Russell Wallace in the 19th Century, who accumulated outstanding collections of fauna from Brazil and the islands of S.W. Asia, and whose treatise on Natural Selection helped Darwin in his formulation of the Origin of Species.

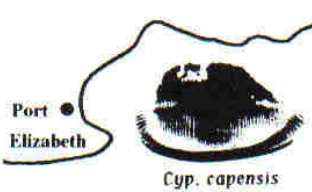
However, I am certainly not complaining about our lot, as the enhancement of knowledge should be our ultimate goal. During a decade of collecting, I have amassed specimens of a few thousand species, from various comers of the globe, mostly self-collected or from exchange, and have benefitted from the help and kindness of many shell collectors. Recently I have started collecting beach grit, and with the help of a colleague in The Netherlands, we have managed to find many microshell species not formerly found on our

shores. Mine is a reference collection, to assist me in the identification of species; some of my specimens are far from perfect, which many collectors would perhaps discard, but I judge them by whether they have sufficient characteristics to identify the species. I have also managed to computerize my collection. Together with another colleague from Holland, we have made our modest contribution by publishing a Checklist of Molluscs of the Red Sea.

One subject which I consider to have been badly neglected is Endemism. Unfortunately, in very few publications is it mentioned, but hopefully more information will be forthcoming in the near future, to increase our knowledge of Biodiversity on our planet.

I cannot think of any hobby, from which more pleasure and interest can be derived, so we really are very lucky to have joined the ranks of the Shellers, providing we observe the requirements of the habitats in which we operate, and do not deplete their treasures unnecessarily. Trusting that cooperation will become the keyword of our future relations, and enhance the wealth and joy of shell collecting, and elicit more smiles from both the amateur and professional malacologist.

* Zvi Orlin (The Desert Gazelle),
2 Yavne st., 26382 Kiryat Motzkin,
Israel
zviornlin@actcom.co.il



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... From page 3

Columbariinae of South Africa

Coluzea angulare (Barnard, 1959)

Profile angulate, periphery at or slightly above mid-whorl; suture straight; axial ribs from suture to suture on early whorls, 12-13 on later whorls, forming bluntly triangular lobes at periphery, stronger below than above periphery; spiral lirae 7-9 above and 5-6 below periphery on later whorls, equal in strength except for 2 strong lirae below periphery; colour white.

Locality: Off Cape Point beyond the slope of the continental shelf; 1320-1650m.

Note: Shell more slender, axial sculpture stronger and spiral lirae more numerous than in *C. radiale*. Most rare South African species.

Coluzea juliae Harasewych, 1989

Profile angulate, strong spiral cords rendering shell cone-shaped; periphery below mid-whorl; suture straight, channelled; axial ribs less pronounced in later whorls, end in 15-16 peripheral spines overhanging suture; spiral sculpture 2-3 strong spiral cords above periphery, base of body whorl with 2 strong spiral cords; colour white.

Locality: Type locality off Inhaca Island, Mozambique, but also occurs off Natal; 550-660m.

Columbarium natalense Tomlin, 1928

Profile angulate, periphery above mid-whorl; suture obscured by uneven spiral cord; axial sculpture 10-12 prominent, hollow, upturned spines with fine axial raised threads giving the shell a scaly appearance; spiral sculpture 3 broad spiral lirae and 4 spiral threads above peripheral spines, the latter crossing the bases of the spines and 4 prominent lirae below periphery, followed by 1 strong cord; colour brown, often with white siphonal canal.

Locality: Off Natal and Eastern Cape; 90-160m.

Note: Smallest South African species.



Coluzea radiale (Watson, 1882)

Profile of whorls convex to slightly angulate, periphery at mid-whorl; suture slightly undulate; axial ribs weak, forming 15-20 bluntly triangular lobes on periphery of later whorls, fewer on earlier whorls, ribs from suture to suture on early whorls, absent above periphery on later whorls; spiral sculpture stronger than axial sculpture, spiral lirae 2-4 above and 1-3 below periphery of mature whorls; colour white.

Locality: Off Cape Point and west coast of Cape Peninsula; 160-420m.

Coluzea rotundum (Barnard, 1959)

Profile almost evenly convex with a slight shoulder, slightly concave above periphery, periphery at mid-whorl; suture straight; Axial ribs prominent, from suture to suture on early whorls, 12-19 on later whorls, more prominent below periphery; spiral lirae subordinate to axial ribs, uneven in strength, 7-9 above and 5-8 below periphery of later whorls; colour white.

Locality: Off Cape Point and Cape Town on the outer slopes of the continental shelf; 460-1390m.

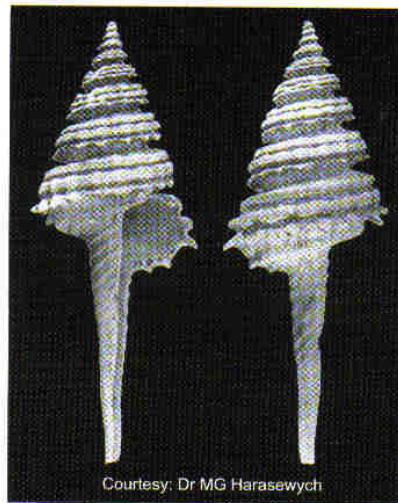
Top:

Coluzea angulare

Bottom Left to Right:

Alwyn and Johan Marais seen relaxing during a recent shelling trip to Hluleka





Coluzea formosissimum (Tomlin, 1928)

Profile angulate, periphery below mid-whorl; suture strongly undulate; axial sculpture 9-11 low, somewhat irregular undulations, forming blunt or sharply triangular peripheral lobes, axial sculpture stronger below than above periphery; up to 10 fine spiral threads above periphery on early whorls, obsolete on 7th whorl except for 2-3 faint threads directly above lobes, 7-8 spiral threads of unequal strength below suture; colour white.

Locality: Off Natal to Southern Cape; 120-340m.

Note: Can be distinguished from *C. eastwoodae* by its blunt peripheral lobes and relatively broader siphonal canal.

Top Left to Right:

Coluzea natalense
Coluzea juliae

Bottom Left to Right:

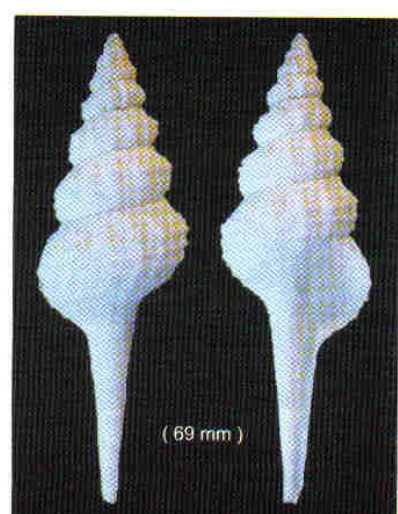
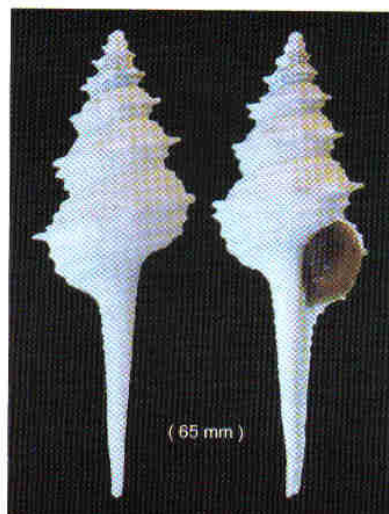
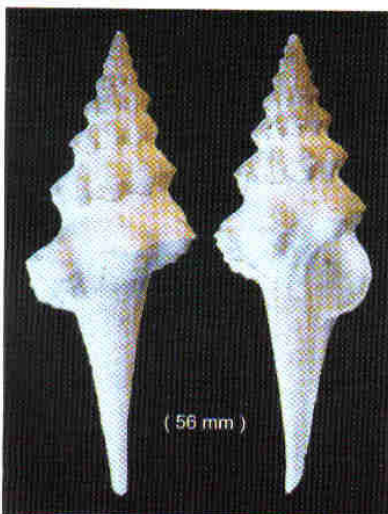
Coluzea formosissimum
Coluzea radiale
Coluzea rotundum

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Alwyn Marais
P.O. Box 870
Florida Hills
1716
South Africa

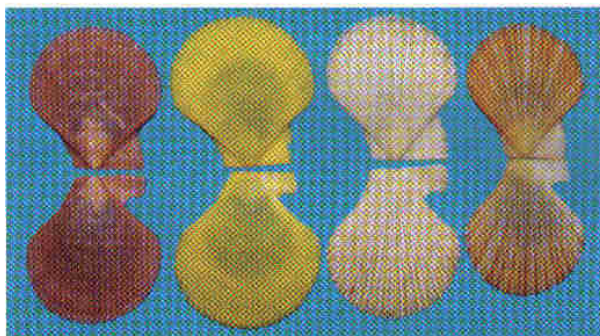
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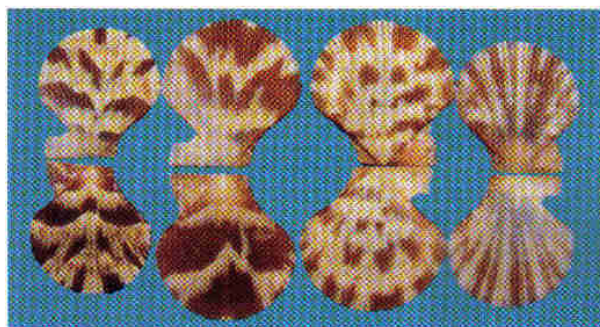
Colour variation in *Talochlamys humilis* (Sowerby, 1904)

- Mike Els

Talochlamys humilis (G.B. Sowerby 3rd, 1904) is a deep water species, not being found on beaches in my experience, and is collected by commercial fishing trawlers operating in 100-250m on the south-western Agulhas Bank to as far east as western Transkei. There it has been collected during the Natal Museum Dredging Programme as shallow as 70m. Although occasional specimens are collected when the fishing nets haul up sandy substrate or mud balls, the majority of specimens are collected *ex pisce* from the Horsefish, usually *Congiopodus torvus* (Gronovius, 1772). These fish are ardent molluscivores and a relatively small, delicate pecten probably represents an easy food item to swallow. The physical properties of the pecten allows easy access for the digestive enzymes and a high protein reward, compared to many of the tough, sharp or spiny, operculum-defended gastropods that share the habitat. It appears that fish and humans both relish eating members of this family!



Talochlamys humilis are smallish and seldom exceeds 25mm in height. They demonstrate a superb range of both colour and pattern. Although the intensity of colour is not as great as *Talochlamys multistriata* (Poli, 1795) (previously known to us as *Chlamys tinctoria* E.A. Smith, 1906; synonymized by Dijkstra and Kilburn in 2001), the species shows a much wider pattern range than *T. multistriata*. Colours include white, yellow, orange, orange-red, pale pink to violet, purple as well as various shades of brown. Perhaps the most striking form is one of alternating white and red rays.



Interestingly, many of the best quality specimens are covered in a soft yellow-brown sponge, which appears to protect the shell and its delicate micro sculpture on the long, rough

journey between the muddy sea bed and the collectors table. I suspect that this sponge may also be found to represent another example of commensalisms or symbiosis between a mollusk and its cover, as can be seen in *Burnapena papyracea* where the toxic purple or orange bryozoan *Alcyonidium nodosum* provides protection and camouflage to its host. However, it appears that the sponge does not deter horsefish from consuming the *T. humilis*! Some specimens have a covering layer of a hard, brittle, flat encrusting bryozoan, probably fulfilling the same function as the sponge, but that is much more difficult to remove without damaging the underlying sculpture.



This is another example of a cool-water Cape shell that can surprise and delight us with its palette of subtle colors and pattern!

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Dijkstra HH and Kilburn RN. *The family Pectinidae in South Africa and Mozambique*. African Invertebrates December 2001.

* Dr. Mike Els

P.O. Box 15827, Emerald Hill, Port Elizabeth,
6011, South Africa

mikeels@global.co.za

EDITOR STRANDLOPER

Mrs. Kobie du Preez
P.O. Box 51694
Wierdapark
0149
South Africa

editor@conch-sa.org.za
Tel: H +27 12-6602394
Mobile +27 82-3726790