



SEA BONES #6

A Newsletter on Southern African conchological matters from the desk of Roy Aiken.

“THE MORE YOU LEARN ABOUT YOUR NATURAL WORLD, THE MORE YOU WILL CONNECT TO ALL LIFE.”

Shelling friends:

The “Thought” for this Sea Bones centres on ‘sensuality’

Sensuality involves all our senses: sight, sound, taste, touch and smell. This is what fulfils us, what touches us. Sensuality is always exciting as it engages so much more of who we are, and allows us to be more creative. It allows for a greater emotional connection.

Take a moment to really savour a taste or smell, listen to a sound in a way that resonates inside you, watch the sunset, wherever you are. As wonderful as a beach is, anywhere can be beautiful. Take a deep breath and enjoy the beautiful colours of the sky. Be aware of the rain or the wind, the warmth of the sun on your skin.

A piece of music evokes the same sensation, or the lingering scent of perfume. It’s there when you feel the sea between your toes, sometimes it’s in bird song, or a psychedelic sunrise. Whatever the trigger, without sensuality life would lack colour, vibrancy, emotion, purpose and love. By living sensually, you begin to see the world in vivid colour and delight in the goodness that envelops you daily. You’re always in the moment and aren’t hung up on the future or the past. And this has a huge bearing on how you perceive life.

One aspect of sensuality, blown out of proportion in the modern world, is the basic

concept of mating. So let us consider the ways of molluscan procreation:

Molluscs have a variety of courtship and mating patterns. Some undergo elaborate courting rituals. Others passively shed their spawn. Many molluscs are hermaphrodites, both sexes existing within each animal. To solve the eternal problem of finding a mate of the opposite sex, hermaphrodites fertilize each other! Large European land snails perform a dramatic hermaphroditic courtship dance.



They stand up and press their bodies together. The snails then fire their ‘love dart’ into each other. This penetrates the body and stimulates mating. The snails exchange sperms to fertilize their eggs, each laying up to fifty in a hole in the ground. This improves the survival chance of a species, because all individuals are able to lay eggs. Some molluscs change their sex! Certain limpets mature first as males, then pass through a hermaphrodite phase before developing into mature females. However, sexes are separate in a large percentage of molluscs. Many molluscs

lay their eggs in a protective covering. This may be tough and leathery, or a soft jelly-like mass. Small or weak embryos are eaten by the stronger young snails.

Molluscs have much the same senses as other animals, with the exception, it seems, of hearing and taste. They are silent creatures, and have no means of making sounds as do many other animals.

Tentacles on the head of snails help to guide them by touching the surface as they move. The sense of smell is located in the organ in the mantle cavity that detects changes in salt content, chemicals, and sediment density. Sight is important. Eyes vary from simple light sensitive cells in chitons, to the eyes of cephalopods which are capable of focusing. Bivalves are totally blind on the other hand. Molluscs really have a sensual existence, in the “now” only!

Remember the above the next time you pick out any one of your treasured shells, and may these thoughts add an extra dimension to the pleasure you will derive from this wonderful hobby.

Yours in good shelling...

Roy Aiken

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Images courtesy of Snails & Slugs accessible at <http://snailsandslugs.wordpress.com>



Barely 3 mm in size, these *Cornu aspersum* explore the world for the first time. Eggs hatched after 12 days of incubation, and the fully formed and self-sufficient baby snails emerged from the ground, crawling their way to food and shelter.



Adult *Cornu aspersum*, carrying one of its newborns.



An intimate moment.

Notice of AGM

This serves to announce our next Annual General Meeting, which is scheduled to take place once again at the Lapa at Laerskool Uitsig, 46 Yelande street, The Reeds, Centurion, on Saturday 16th June, 2012.

The Agenda consists of:

WELCOME, ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES.

HONOURING MEMBERS THAT HAVE PASSED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AGM, held on 10th September, 2011

MATTERS ARISING FROM ABOVEMENTIONED MINUTES

- Lifetime Awards discussion
- President's Report
- Financial Report, and focus on outstanding subscriptions
- Update on Shell publications AND STRANDLOPER.
- National shell
- The status of Groups
- Special presentation
- Judging of exhibits by the President

GENERAL

THANK YOU'S.

The Theme for this years' AGM is "Now that's impressive!"