

Hawaiian Shell News

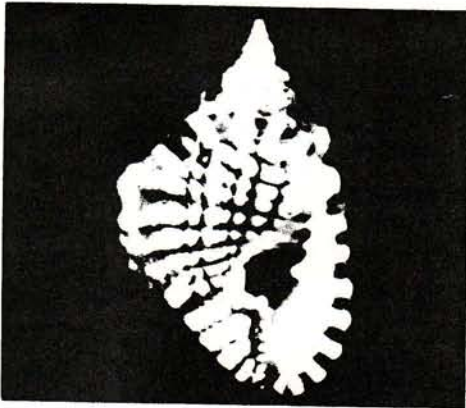
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NEW DISTORSIO

by RUTH FAIR



Distorsio burgessi Lewis, 1972

We in Hawaii have had the feeling for many years that we had a *Distorsio* which might not be simply a color variation of *D. anus*. Now we are delighted to announce that this unusually beautiful and uncommon *Distorsio* has been named in honor of Dr. C. M. "Pat" Burgess, *Distorsio burgessi* by Hal Lewis, Research Associate of the Department of Malacology of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.

D. burgessi joins the list of endemic Hawaiian shells, according to Lewis. This species was called to Mr. Lewis' attention through a front-page article in HSN by Pat Burgess in 1963.

The species is, according to Lewis, quite similar in appearance to *Distorsio anus* but can be easily separated by the straight anterior siphonal canal (*D. anus*' canal always is angled to the left), the ruffled edge restricted to the outer lip and stained between the sculptured ruffles and the parietal shield which covers approximately 1½ the preceding whorls, and the rich dark brown staining between the nodules on the parietal shield which gives the apertural side a distinct checkerboard effect.

Lewis states, in his article in *The Nautilus* Vol. 86 (2-4) p. 46: "in spite of the rich pigmentation present on the parietal shield of *burgessi*, it is lacking in the rich body whorl pigmentation typical of *Distorsio anus*."

SIX TEREBRA LOOK-ALIKES

by TWILA BRATCHER

Terebra commaculata (Gmelin, 1791) is one of a confusing group of long slender *Terebra* with brown markings. Most of them have double subsutural bands and more or less cancellate sculpture. Most of them are rare. This article is an effort to straighten out this complex for *Terebra* collectors.

T. commaculata, originally described from the Andaman Islands, has been showing up on dealers' lists recently under the erroneous name of *T. myuros* Lamarck, 1822. Walter Cernohorsky has pointed out that *T. myuros* is a synonym of *T. anilis* (Roding, 1798), the holotype of which is a shell less slender than *T. commaculata* with no brown markings at all. While color may vary greatly within the *Terebra* species, patterns of spots, dots, blotches or stripes usually are dependable.

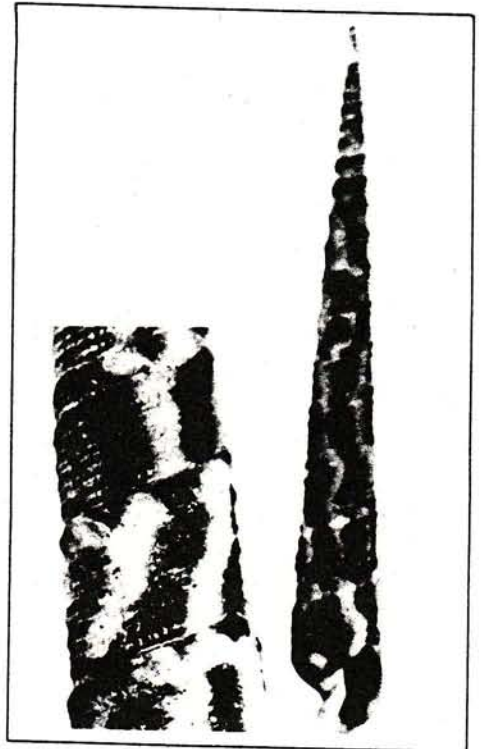
At any rate, whether *T. myuros* is a synonym for *T. anilis* or for *T. commaculata*, the name would have to go. Both of the alternate names predate it.

An example of the general confusion surrounding the *Terebra* was the response to a picture appearing in the October 1972 issue of *Hawaiian Shell News*, with a request for help in identification. The shell, a *Terebra*, had been trawled in about 100 feet of water in Tayabas, Philippines.

I responded, identifying the species as *T. fujitai* Kuroda & Habe, 1925; someone identified it as *T. pretiosa* Reeve, 1849. Obviously, the confusion needed to be straightened out, but I procrastinated until Franz Steiner sent me a collection of *Terebra* trawled off Madras, India including specimens of *T. commaculata*.

Here are the facts on this confusing group: *Terebra commaculata* (Gmelin, 1791). Long, slender and flat in outline; beige with brown blotches forming axial stripes, sometimes in line with stripes on adjoining whorls, sometimes offset.

The double subsutural band is almost flat in later whorls. Nucleus of 1½ smooth, extremely inflated whorls; early whorls are concave with double subsutural band consisting of beaded nodes, the upper or posterior band being slightly more prominent. The sculpture of the spiral



Photos: Bratcher

Terebra commaculata (Gmelin, 1791). Note flat outline, cancellate sculpture with spiral cords predominating; no cancellate sculpture on presutural band; brown stripe, like blotches.

cords predominates in early whorls although crossed by less strong axial ribs, causing a cancellate look (lattice-like). In later whorls the outline flattens out, and subsutural bands become flatter, not marked with cancellate sculpture. The remaining whorl does contain cancellate sculpture, with spiral cords remaining stronger; the outer lip is elongate and somewhat flared at lower or anterior end.

Terebra pretiosa Reeve, 1849. This species is not so flat in outline nor as slender as *T. commaculata*. It also has concave early whorls with a double subsutural band, but here the axial sculpture predominates. In later whorls the band becomes broad and flat with the second

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TEREBRA PROBLEMS

(Cont'd from Page 1)



T. stearnsi Pils., 1891. Note concave outline; sculpture of strong spiral cords not cancellate.

band, anterior to or lower than the first, becoming only a slight swelling. The feature that most easily separates this species from *T. commaculata* is that the blotches of this species are arranged as a broken brown spiral stripe with a light stripe above it in the area of the second subsutural band. This stripe varies with individuals. There is also a light stripe on the periphery of the body whorl.

Terebra fujitai Kuroda & Habe, 1925 could easily be confused with *T. pretiosa*. The color markings are similar, and only by careful examination can one see the differences. The greatest difference is that *T. fujitai* has one broad subsutural band with the ends of the axial ribs swollen just beneath the band but not cut through by a spiral groove. *T. pretiosa* has a double subsutural band, the posterior being broader and more pronounced.

T. fujitai is more turreted, regularly stepped and less flat in outline. The sculpture consists of strong, quite regular axial ribs about the same width as the interspaces. The numerous spiral cords rarely cross the ribs, so the sculpture does not look cancellate. The sculpture of *T. pretiosa* cuts the ribs more and therefore looks more cancellate.

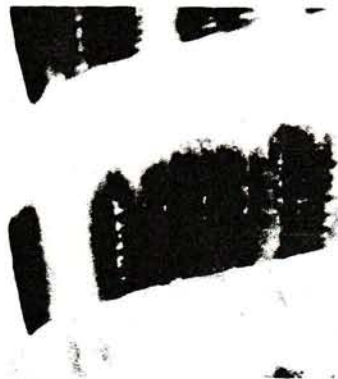
Terebra stearnsi Pilsbry, 1891 has irregular brown splotches. The outline of the shell is of concave whorls with a broad convex subsutural band bordered by narrow convex bands on each side, the lower or anterior being narrower. The remainder of the sculpture is not cancellate, being of heavy spiral cords.

Terebra lima Deshayes, 1857 resembles *T. commaculata* but has shorter whorls, a short body whorl and somewhat less fine sculpture. The aperture is quadrate rather than elongate, and the columella is curved rather than recurved. The most easily noted difference in these two species is that cancellate sculpture appears on the subsutural bands of *T. lima* but not on *T. commaculata*.

Terebra fortunei Deshayes, 1857 is also long, slender and marked with brown bands on



T. lima Deshayes, 1857. Note flat outline; extremely cancellate sculpture with both axial and spiral nearly equal on subsutural band and whorl.



T. fujitai Kuroda & Habe, 1925. Turreted outline, sculpture not cancellate, strong axial ribs weakly spirally sculptured, single broad subsutural band.



T. pretiosa Reeve, 1849. Flat outline; cancellate sculpture with axial ribs predominating; double subsutural band.

the whorls. But it is easily separated from the others because it has no subsutural band at all.

A common misconception about the family Terebridae is that all terebrids have a poison gland and barbed radula similar to cone shells. Only a small percentage of *Terebra* have these. As far back as 1880 Hutton, in his *Manual of New Zealand Mollusca*, stated that in the family of Terebridae the radula is rudimentary. In 1885 Tryon, in his *Manual of Conchology*, mentioned three types of *Terebra*: Those with

mouth mass at the end of the proboscis furnished with arrow-like teeth, and a poison gland; those with no teeth, no venom gland; and those with mouth containing a true radula but no poison gland.

Maxwell Smith in 1937 and Joyce Allan in 1950 stated that some species of *Terebra* have been found to possess a poison gland. In 1966, Cernohorsky in *The Terebridae of Fiji*, *The Veliger*, vol. 9, no. 1, said, "Examination of almost forty specimens of more common species of *Terebra* failed to disclose a radular ribbon."

Australian Shell Convention

The Western Australia Shell Club at Perth will be host to the next Australian Shell Convention, according to word from HMS member Barry Hargreaves of that city. The last two conventions were held in Yeppoon, Queensland.

The gathering will be in late August-early September of 1974. The convention itself, plus related activities before and after the meeting, will occupy approximately three weeks, writes Hargreaves.

The convention has the backing of the Malacological Society of Australia.

"Organized collecting trips are planned for a few days before the convention proper," says Hargreaves. "The convention — including a shell exhibit and social activities — will occupy approximately one week. A dredging-collecting excursion to the Abrolhos Islands, 300 miles north of Perth, is proposed for after the convention."

The arrangement committee promises additional information on the schedule as the planning progresses.

Oahu Observations

Pierre, the patient gourmet, came to live at my house early in 1972. He made himself quite at home in my twenty-gallon aquarium. You could always find him hanging out in a large chunk of porous coral that had about a dozen small oysters clinging to it.

George Campbell found Pierre under a slab of coral in about twenty feet of water, off Kahe Point, Leeward Oahu. After we got ashore and looked through our goodies, George handed me this fine little *Cymatium pileare*, saying, "Here's one for your aquarium."

It wasn't long before I found out about Pierre's gourmet appetite. One morning I saw him sitting on the lip of an oyster's valve. That evening, he was in the same place. By next morning, his patience had been rewarded. The oyster was gaping, and Pierre had his proboscis inside, collecting a delicious meal.

Yes sir. A real gourmet. Raw oyster on the half shell and never mind the dash of lemon!

Bob Purtyman