

The Terebrids of American Samoa

By BOB PURTYMUN

PLEASANTON, CA — During my fifteen months on Tutuila, American Samoa, I was able to collect 24 terebrid species, even though the island has little natural habitat for the family.

The key to survival is in the sandy bottoms of the many borrow pits along the south shore, where coral has been excavated for building. Almost all of my collecting in these three to six-meter-deep man-made habitats was done at night using scuba.

Tutuila is a young island, geologically speaking, and has not yet formed the extensive natural shallow sand-bottom areas necessary to support a large terebra population. The sand offshore, ten to 40 meters deep, is of poor consistency. Records for greater depths were not compiled, as no dredging was done.

Of the 24 species brought up only six could be called common. The majority ranged from uncommon to unique. Sizes, in general, were small as is noted in the following list.

Terebridae of Tutuila Island, American Samoa Collected in 1975 and 1976

- Terebra affinis* Gray, 1834, very common, to 43mm.
T. amoena Deshayes, 1859. Two collected, to 28mm.
T. areolata (Link, 1807). Approximately 30 collected, to 108mm.
T. argus Hinds, 1844. Ten collected, to 78mm.
T. babylonia Lamarck, 1822. Very common, to 70mm.
T. cerithina Lamarck, 1822. Thirteen collected, to 53mm.
T. cingulifera Lamarck, 1822. Very common, to 72mm.
T. columellaris Hinds, 1844. Seventeen collected, to 45mm.
T. conspersa Hinds, 1844. Seven collected, to 32mm.
T. crenulata (Linne, 1758). Seven collected, to 103mm.
T. dimidiata (Linne, 1758). Very common, to 114mm.
T. felina (Dillwyn, 1817). Three collected, to 53mm.
T. fijiensis (E. A. Smith, 1873). Four collected, to 21mm.
T. flavescens Deshayes, 1859. Five collected, to 34mm.
T. flavofasciata Pilsbry, 1921. One collected, to 19mm.
T. guttata (Roeding, 1798). Uncommon, to 117mm.
T. kilburni R. D. Burch, 1965. One collected, to 34mm.
T. maculata (Linne, 1758). Fairly common. Average size 120mm.
T. nebulosa Sowerby, 1825. Nine collected, to 71mm.
T. paucistriata (E. A. Smith, 1873). Eighteen collected, to 33mm.
T. subulata (Linne, 1767). Common, to 119mm.
T. undulata Gray, 1834. Uncommon, to 50mm.
Hastula lauta (Pease, 1869). Four collected, to 20mm.
H. strigilata (Linne, 1758). One collected, to 20mm.

Screwiest Murex



HMS member Cid Derry of Fullerton, CA recently acquired what he describes as "the world's screwiest specimen" of *Murex zamboi* Burch & Burch. The shell measures 69mm. The completely uncoiled teleconch is over 20mm. The whole is dark yellow and white. The very erect lip of the aperture has black vertical stripes.

Derry got the shell on a buying trip to the Philippines, where it presumably was found.

E.G.L.

Keep Your Cowries

Cowry shells have been called the jewels of the molluscan world. Primitive man would be the first to agree.

He used them as money from the earliest times — and still does in some isolated backwaters in Africa and Australasia. He stitched them to his ceremonial masks and headdresses, used them to decorate his boats and totems, and draped them on his person in strings of necklaces and belts, a practice probably stemming from the fact that to early peoples these shells symbolized sex and life eternal.

Ancient Egyptians put cowries over the eyes of their mummies to guarantee sight in the hereafter. Even today in parts of Asia mothers-to-be will clench a cowry in each hand to ease the pains of childbirth.

From the *Shell Desk Diary* for 1974

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CAPITALIZATION OF SPECIES NAMES

By JERRY WALLS

NEPTUNE, NJ — May I offer two comments on Dr. Alan Kohn's review (HSN Sept. 1979) of my *Cone Shells*?

1. Kohn noted that a "disconcertingly large number" of species names begin with capital letters. These were original spellings, not typographical errors. Until this century it was standard procedure to capitalize nouns and certain other words in scientific names. A synonym should give the original name as the describer gave it, whether correct under modern rules or not.

2. The lectotype designations for the Hwass names and others are based on my interpretation of Articles 72 and 74 of the ICZN Code. Whenever a describer mentioned not only specimens but cited figures from the literature, the figures have the same status as the specimens. One cannot make the assumption offhand that a specimen in a collection is the holotype.

Hwass usually cited several figures in his original descriptions and did not specify that his new taxa were based solely on specimens examined. Thus the specimen(s) and figure(s) cited have equal status as co-types. No holotype can be designated in such a situation, only a lectotype.

The placement of the color plates in the book relative to the text was due to printing imperatives and beyond the control of the author — or the publisher, for that matter.

Incidentally, I agree completely with Dr. Kohn's final sentence: "This book will be quite useful but . . . it is hardly the last word." *Cone Shells* was intended to focus attention on cones and their problems, and to serve as an incentive to further work. It is not the last work on the subject.

Dr. Kohn Responds

SEATTLE — Walls' interpretation of Articles 73 and 74 is quite correct; previously published descriptions and figures cited in synonymies have equal status with specimens as cotypes (the preferred term nowadays is 'syntypes').

However, in this case it is logically impossible to ascribe the species to Hwass, as Walls does in his book, and consider these cited specimens as syntypes. It has been known since 1792 (Bruguière, *Enc. Méth.*, p. 598; Clench, *Johnsonia*, 1(6): 3, 1942; Kohn, *Pacific Science*, 13: 369, 1959) that Hwass named the species, prepared the Latin diagnoses and possessed the specimens (now in the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, Geneva). Bruguière later added the synonymies and French descriptions.

Therefore, if the names are attributed to Hwass, as is now generally accepted, the figured specimens in the synonymies of Bruguière cannot be considered syntypes.

Alan J. Kohn

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