SHELL·O·GRAM

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Nov. - Dec., 2022 _____ Volume 63 (no. 6)

Upcoming meetings

The Jacksonville Shell Club, Inc. (JSC) customarily meets on the **fourth** Thursday of each month except for November (a week earlier due to Thanksgiving) and December (traditional Xmas get-together/TBA) in Function Room D of the Southeast Branch, Jax Public Library https://www.jaxpubliclibrary.org/locations/southeast-regional. The main program on November 17 will deal with the gastropods Paul collected while in the service of Uncle Sam and garrisoned at Acitrezza, Sicily. A significant portion of his material originated in the frutti di mare markets in the ancient city, which, along with the more renowned Pompeii, lies within the shadow of Mt. Etna. Some further background on the expeditions can be found on pp. 5-7 at http://www.jaxshells.org/pdfs/sepoct16.pdf. Paul's presentation at the May 19, 2016 meeting, which featured the bivalves of the region was well-received by us and has gone "on the road," where he presented it to the Broward Shell Club. Also, we will welcome a very special guest to the meeting. You'll have to attend to find out who though! It will be a totally awesome meeting all the way around!

To restore the pelecypods' position in molluscan biodiversity, Mary Reynolds will make the Buttercup Lucine http://www.jaxshells.org/tmmk.htm the shell-of-the month. While not very common on our beaches, this clam is an iconic shell in the southern portions of our state.

Also... we have designated Saturday, December 10th, 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM as our combination shell ID party at Paul's Jones's house, 3609 Crazy Horse Trail, St. Augustine, and, as we have done in the past a few times, afterwards gather at a St. Augustine area restaurant to establish the JSC annual Christmas Party. Just mark your calendars for now, more details to follow on by email. If you have any doubts about the location and the agenda for the the proceedings of either portion of the day, Paul keeps the homefires burning at (904) 347-7254 and jonesp0854@gmail.com.

Membership Dues are payable in **September** each year.
Many of you have complied, but if you're in arrears, please send in your dues:
Individual $15.00; Family $20.00, to
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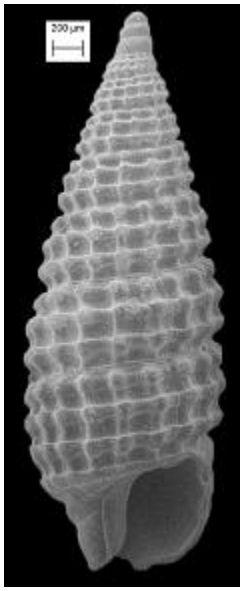
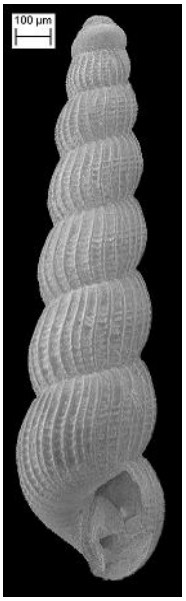
The club customarily meets monthly at the Southeast Branch of the Jacksonville Public Library, 10599 Deerwood Park Blvd,, Jacksonville, Florida https://www.jaxpubliclibrary.org/locations/southeast-regional. Please address any correspondence to the club's address above. Annual membership dues are $15.00 individual, $20.00 family (domestic) and $25.00 (overseas). Lifetime membership is available. Please remit payment for dues to the address below and make checks payable to the Jacksonville Shell Club. The club's newsletter and scientific journal, the *Shell-O-Gram* (ISSN 2472-2774) is issued bimonthly and mailed to an average of 15 regular members and friends by specific request and no less than ten scientific institutions with permanent libraries. An electronic (pdf) version, identical except for "live" URL's and color (vs. B&W) images, is issued about two days later and sent to about 200 individuals who have demonstrated an interest in malacological research and/or Florida mollusks. These pdf's (ISSN 2472-2782) have also been posted to http://jaxshells.org/letters.htm since November, 1998. We encourage members and other friends to submit articles for publication. Closing date for manuscript submission is two weeks before each month of publication. Articles appearing in the *Shell-O-Gram* may be republished provided credit is given the author and *Shell-O-Gram* Editor-in-Chief. As a courtesy, the editor and author should receive a copy of the original and republication version respectively. Contents of the *Shell-O-Gram* are intended to enter the permanent scientific record. The club is a chartered corporation in the State of Florida and a non-profit educational organization under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the US IRS Code.

Field-trips



Paul Jones reports that the JSC field trip to the Jupiter Sound/Foster Park/ Peanut Island area of SE Florida Wed., Oct. 26 to Sat., Oct. 29 was a resounding success and thoroughly enjoyed by the five folks who participated. Lots and lots of snorkeling was done, and many treasures were found! Your editor has only processed a fraction of Jupiter Sound grunge harvested by Rick Edwards on the expedition, but many dozen species, including specimens of *Cerithiopsis susieae* Rolán & Krisberg, 2014 [**L**; 3.67mm] and *Graphis underwoodae* Bartsch, 1947 [**R**; 1.65mm] have been culled.

Updates on upcoming JSC field trips - The November field trip to Cedar Key is booked full with 12 folks heading over to our favorite NW Florida shell paradise over Thanksgiving. If you didn't or couldn't make that one, no worries; another one is being planned for the third week of January, 2023, for those who had holiday conflicts this year. More details to come on both.



A blast from the past

This slightly-edited souvenir postcard was produced around 1980 by JSC members Allan Walker & Dale Bulock, both of whom was Show Chair in the halcyon years that produced such extravaganzas. Thanks to Bill Aley and his grandmother Billie Brown, another Show chair in that era, for providing this memento from their archive.

Mystery Mollusk: *Rapana rapiformis* (Born, 1778) in Florida

by Robert R. Fales*

On a sunny afternoon in mid-July 1973, I was collecting by wading the shallows and searching the rocks on the Atlantic Ocean side of the Overseas Highway bridge causeway immediately north of Fiesta Key, Monroe Co., Florida.[1] During the search, I found a live strange gastropod that I identified as a muricid, but had no idea beyond that surmise what it might be (**figure atop next page**). I kept, processed, and tried to identify the specimen using those U.S.A. shell guides of the that I possessed (not that many back then).

[1] I apologize for the "fluffiness" of the reporting data. At that point in my life, I was a "shoebox collector," not yet having learned the wisdom that more important than the identification is the complete, accurate recording of the details: "what, when, where, who, and how."

It did not occur to me that the gastropod might be a non-native species, and, in any event, there was no Internet to facilitate searching. I returned to the Florida Keys in July 1986, and shelled extensively for four days from Fiesta Key south to Bahia Honda Key, but I did not find another specimen.

The shell sat unidentified in my collection for 40 years until I discovered Marlo Krisberg's *Let's Talk Seashells* (LTS) web site in September 2013, when it was hosted by Invisionfree (ah, a robust Internet).[2] I posted pictures to that portion of the site designed to solicit identification help, and another member eventually replied that the specimen was *Rapana venosa* (Valenciennes, 1846).

A little research showed that *R. venosa* is found in the western Pacific Ocean. More recent research revealed that, although the species is native to the Yellow, East China, and Bohai Seas, and the Sea of Japan, it has spread westward via human intervention, and established populations in the Black Sea and Sea of Azov, parts of the Mediterranean Sea, the Brittany coast of France, the lower Chesapeake Bay, USA (discovered in 1998; see http://www.jaxshells.org/1105xx.htm), and the Rio de la Plata estuary between Uruguay and Argentina (Harding and Mann, 1999; ICES, 2004; NOBANIS). There are also prior reports of incidental finds in Willapa Bay, Washington, that did not result in established populations (Burch, 1952 [identified as *R. thomasiana* Crosse, 1861, now considered a synonym for *R. venosa*]; Hanna, 1966). Still, however, there is no mention of additional observations in the western hemisphere. Despite my pleasure at finding a new location for an invasive species as time went on, there grew a tiny niggling of doubt in my mind: *R. venosa* is described and pictured as a large, heavy shell with a labrum extending virtually to the end of the short siphonal canal, an

[2] LTS is currently hosted by WiX (https://olram9.wixsite.com/letstalkseashells).

aperture that is almost always bright orange-red or yellow, a concave columella, and a periumbilical structure and siphonal canal that are straight or canted slightly to the right (toward the labrum) – not really the appearance of my shell. I was willing, however, to assume that I had a juvenile specimen that did not express adult characteristics.

In November 2021, I posted pictures of my specimen to the *iNaturalist* web site[3], and in October 2022, another member identified the shell as *Rapana rapiformis* (Born, 1778), a species with which he was familiar. I posted a query to Conch-L[4] asking members to look at the photographs on *iNaturalist* and render an opinion. I received three replies, two from noted experts in mollusk identification, and the third from a member who lives in South Korea and is familiar with the species, all opining that the specimen was, indeed, *R. rapiformis*. As supporting evidence, a photograph of *R. rapiformis* in the on-line database of the Natural History Museum Rotterdam looks almost exactly like the specimen in Figure 1 (see NMHR in literature cited).

The situation was now "curiouser and curiouser" as I could find no mention in the literature of *R. rapiformis* being observed anywhere in the Western Hemisphere. The species' range is described as the Indo-West Pacific area: east Africa and the waters surrounding the Saudi Arabian peninsula to Melanesia, thence north to Japan and south to Australia and New Caledonia (Barash and Danin, 1977; GBIF; OBIS; Zenetos, et al, 2010). There is a questionable report of a juvenile specimen collected in the eastern Mediterranean Sea by fishermen off Bardawil, Egypt, in 1976 (Barash and Danin, 1977), but the observation remained questionable as late as 2010 (Zenetos *et al*, 2010).

How did the snail I found in 1973 arrive? There have been several vectors posited for the colonization of new territory by *R. venosa* via human intervention that would apply to all congeners, e.g.: transport in rock, sand, or water ballast of ships; fouling of hulls or submerged equipment with egg masses; or association with oyster spat imported for culture (Mann and Harding, 2000; NOBANIS). It is also possible that the snail was part of someone's exotic aquarium collection and was discarded when no longer wanted, or was an escapee or discard from a shipment for an imported-seafood market. How the snail arrived at Fiesta Key is a question that will never be answered; that it was there, however, is beyond dispute. This observation illustrates why shell collectors and other naturalists should be aware of the possibility of finding that "out-of-place" specimen.

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Literature Cited:

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[3] The *iNaturalist* web site (https://www.inaturalist.org/) is a joint initiative of the California Academy of Sciences and the National Geographic Society that allows for the worldwide reporting, with photographic or sound recording evidence, of natural history observations.

[4] The Conch-L "listserv" is an Internet mailing list sponsored by the Conchologists of America and hosted by the University of Georgia that allows shell collectors and malacologists at all levels to communicate freely, share information and ideas, and ask questions about their avocation or vocation. Additional information appears at https://conchologistsofamerica.org/additional-information-resources/.

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