



SHELL-O-GRAM

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JACKSONVILLE SHELL CLUB, INC.

March-April, 2002

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Harry G. Lee, Asst. Editor

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March Meeting

The Thursday March 28th meeting of the Jacksonville Shell Club will be held at the Southeast Branch Public Library at 7:00 PM.

D.D. Jewell will present a talk on carrier shells (Xenophoridae) as the month's educational program.

Harry Lee will give the Shell-Of-The-Month on a carrier shell-volute relationship.

April Meeting

The Thursday April 25th meeting of the Jacksonville Shell Club will be held at the usual time and place.

The program will be given by Mike Hollingsworth, who is the Riverkeeper for the St. Johns. Many American waterways have come under the aegis of this national consortium of conservation-minded stewards, and certainly our "River-of-lakes" merits the special attention and concern of all citizens of the region - especially people like us, who have an avowed interest in preserving natural systems. Mike will tell us what he does and what we can do to advance his mission.

Bill Frank will give Shell-Of-The-Month on *Crassostrea virginica* (Gmelin, 1791), a bivalve which prospers in our estuaries thanks in large part to the provenance of the St. Johns River.

47th Regional Science And Engineering Fair

On February 5th George Hapsis and Nellie Hawley judged the 47th Northeast Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair on behalf of the Jacksonville Shell Club (JSC). This fair is a celebration of the community efforts of the Kiwanis Clubs of Greater Jacksonville, Florida Community College of Jacksonville at Jacksonville and the Jacksonville Corporations as well as volunteers who bring together the best young scientists and engineers in our area. The fair was open to all students in grades 6 through 12 and was held at the Jacksonville Fairgrounds. The club offered a \$75.00 cash stipend to the best science project dealing in marine studies and a \$50.00 award to the runner-up.

The First Place Award was presented to Robert Granat an eighth grade student from James Weldon Johnson College Preparatory Middle School for his exhibit, "What Is The Effect of Salinity On Brine Shrimp Hatch Rate?". Robert's exhibit involved hatching success of equal numbers of eggs in various salinity-controlled environments ranging from fresh to ocean waters. His exhibit emphasized the continued need for protection and improvement of the estuarine environment.

The runner up award was presented to Whitney D. Pritchard a 10th grade student from First Coast High School for her exhibit, "Under The Sea." Whitney's exhibit was a study dealing with the presence of amino acids in seaweed as a possible source of protein for human food around the world.

Note: This article, accompanied by color images, can be viewed at www.jaxshells.org/kwfair02.htm.

Lee County Live Shelling Ban Approved

At its January meeting, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission approved the Lee County Commission proposed ban on the collection [in Florida law - harvest] of all live shells within Lee County. The change took affect on March 1st, 2002. Prior to the change (excepting Sanibel and Fort Myers Beach where total bans were already in effect) it was allowable to collect two live specimens of each species per-day. (Continued on page 2.)



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The **Shell-O-Gram** is issued bimonthly and mailed to all regular members. Annual membership dues are \$12.50 individual and \$15.00 family (domestic), and \$20.00 (foreign). Lifetime membership is available.

Send dues to: Teresa St. John, Treasurer
2605 Emily Court
Jacksonville, FL 32216-5101

The club meets each month, excluding December, at the Southeast Branch Public Library, 10599 Deerwood Park Blvd., Jacksonville Florida. Please address any correspondence to the club's address shown above.

Closing date for article submission is two weeks prior to the first of each month of publication. Articles may be republished provided full credit is given the author and this newsletter and one copy of the complete publication in which the article appears is mailed to Editor at the above address.

JSC's 36th Shell Show

The Jacksonville Shell Club's 36th Shell Show will be held at the Brampton Inn Resort (oceanfront) in downtown Jacksonville Beach on Saturday, July 6th and Sunday, July 7th. The show will be open to the public from 9:00 AM until 5:00 PM on Saturday and from 10:00 AM until 5:00 PM on Sunday. It's not too early to begin preparing your exhibits for the show.

Some details in regards to the show have not yet been finalized, but show rules/regulations and entry forms will be mailed in the immediate future.

Welcome New Members

Harold & Janice Siegfried
22138 Wintergreen Way
Parker CO 80138
Phone: (720) 842-0511
Email: hsiegfried@attbi.com

Phyllis Diegel
2000 N. Congress Ave. No. 223
West Palm Beach, FL 33409
Phone: (561) 689-2708
Email: pdiegel@strato.net

Upcoming Event

****May 4 -5 - Central Florida Shell Show**, Orlando, FL at the Central Florida Fairgrounds, Exhibition Hall A, 4603 W. Colonial Drive, Orlando. Contact Phyllis Gray, 1212 S. Eola Drive, Orlando, FL 32806, Phone (407) 422-0253 or pgray@kennesaw.lawco.com.

Shelling Ban Approved (Continued from page 1.)

It should be noted that the term "shells" as used here is synonymous with "shellfish" which is defined in law as members of the phyla Mollusca and Echinodermata. Specifically excluded are those edible species "oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*), hard clams (*Mercenaria* spp.), and (sic) sunray venus clams (*Macrocallista nimbosa*), bay scallops (*Argopecten irradians*), and coquinas (genus *Donax*)." Harvest is defined as "the catching or taking of live shellfish by any means whatsoever, followed by a reduction of such shellfish to possession. Temporary possession of a shell for the purpose of determining whether it contains a live shellfish shall not constitute harvest, so long as such shellfish is not harmed in any manner." Additionally, simple possession (other than temporary) is prohibited.

Note: See *Shell-O-Gram 41(4)*, July-August, 2000 for previous information on this ban.

Space Coast Shell Festival

On Saturday, January 19th five members of the Jacksonville Shell Club (Bill & Betsy Lyerly, Barbara Moon, Carol Rishel, and Bill Frank) carpooled to the Space Coast Shell Festival held at the Melbourne Auditorium in Melbourne, FL. As usual, there were some great exhibits, it was a pleasant day outing, and everyone found that "special something" to bring home at the tables of the sixteen dealers.

Duval County's Best Shelling Bets - Part I Little Talbot Island State Park

Located about twenty miles from downtown Jacksonville, Little Talbot Island is one of the few remaining undeveloped, barrier islands in Northeast Florida. The entire island, 2,500 acres, is a State Park. The park has more than 5 miles of beautiful, wide sandy beaches, undisturbed salt marshes, and vegetated dunes. Florida State Parks are managed as natural systems. All plant and animal life is protected. Do not remove, deface, mutilate or molest any natural resources.

Bounded on the south by the Ft. George Inlet and on the west by the Ft. George River, Little Talbot Island is truly a barrier island on the move. The southern portion of the island is rapidly moving northward as the Ft. George River channel has changed from an easterly course to a north northeasterly course thus eroding the bottom half of the island. Likewise, the Ft. George River has severely eroded the island's western side - roughly doubling the size of the river bottom and threatening the Ft. George River Bridge.

If you crave solitude, this is the beach to visit. Even during the busiest weekend days of summer, one can easily find a strand where another human will not be seen. During the cooler months, you will likely have all five miles of beach to yourself.

As with most Northeast Florida Beaches, both live and dead mollusks are not common throughout most of the year. The best shelling area is from the first beach walkover access point, near the ranger station, southward to the Ft. George Inlet (about 1.8 miles). This area appears to be especially productive due to the converging currents. Shelling this area 2-3 days after a "northeaster" or other similar rough seas can yield an amazing selection of northeast Florida mollusks. During a similar scenario during 2001, 159 *Epitonium* (four species) were found on a 100-foot stretch of beach.

Four new world record sized bivalve species were collected on this beach by your editor and assistant editor following Tropical Storm Gabrielle last year.

Ref: Hutsell, K. C., L. H. Hutsell, and D. L. Pisor, 2001. *Registry of world record size shells third edition*. Snail's Pace Productions, San Diego, pp. 1-158+ i-vii. June.

Note: This article, accompanied by color images, can be viewed at www.jaxshells.org/jaxshell.htm.

Field Trip To Sanibel Shell Fair & Show

The weekend of March 1st, eleven members of the Jacksonville Shell Club were in attendance at the 65th Annual Sanibel Shell Fair & Show held at the Sanibel Community House on Sanibel Island from March 1st-3rd. Eight club members (Barbara Moon, Selma Hutchison, Anna Bechak, Bill & Betsy Lyerly, Bill Frank, Pam Rice, and Carol Rischel) left Jacksonville early Friday morning for the six and a half hour drive to the island while the remaining club members (Ruth & Frank Abramson who judged the artistic exhibits and Gertrude Moller who entered an artistic exhibit) had traveled to the island earlier in the week.

Headquarters for the Friday travelers was the Shell Point Guest House at the "upscale" Shell Point Retirement Community conveniently located just north

of the Sanibel Causeway. Beautifully landscaped grounds, restricted access, extremely friendly people, and reasonable lodging prices make the facilities at Shell Point hard to beat.

Upon arrival at Shell Point, each group seemed to have their own agenda. Some visited the shops, others couldn't wait to actually shell the famous Sanibel Beaches, and others managed both during the limited hours available on Friday afternoon. It should be mentioned that Friday was the first day that the recently enacted total ban on live shell collecting was in effect in Lee County (see article on page 2.).

Saturday morning early it was again back to the island for more shelling, shopping and a first visit to the Shell Fair & Show, which as usual, had some impressive exhibits. By prior arrangement, we met Dr. Jose' Leal (Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum Director) at the show who had agreed to give the group a "behind the scenes" tour of the museum's work area and collection. The tour was then scheduled for 1:30 PM, which allowed a couple hours of "island roaming" and shelling.

Four of us then drove up to the Blind Pass Bridge where Dr. Leal had been earlier in the day and reported seeing shells being washed in near the jetty. However, he also warned of the noxious "Red Tide."

Upon our arrival at Blind Pass and exiting the car, the "Red Tide" was very noticeable as evidenced by our coughing, sneezing, and a general burning in the throat. There were in fact plenty of craft type shells in the drift (and plenty of people raking through them) but the Red Tide exacerbated by the high winds and tide, made perusing them less than a delightful experience. Since large dunes now close the pass, shelling away from the beach was not productive and the only live species seen were *Batillaria minima* (Gmelin, 1791) [West Indian False Cerith] by the millions and a handful of *Littoraria angulifera* (Lamarck, 1822) [Mangrove Periwinkle].

It was then off to the Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum where we all assembled for the guided tour by Dr. Leal. We were also accompanied on the tour by show judges Roger Portell and John Chessler. It was a unique and interesting experience which was enjoyed by all, and we not only owe Dr. Leal a debt of gratitude for taking time out of his busy schedule to accommodate us, but also to the museum volunteers who extended us every courtesy. One even offered to share her afternoon snack with your editor (who had missed both breakfast and lunch). Following the tour, the group split up again for more shelling, shopping, or return to the guesthouse.

Later the group reconstituted at the local Perkins Restaurant for evening's repast. Unlike the previous night (Friday) when several of us visited the same restaurant, there were only a "lot of people" vs.

“virtually everyone in Ft. Myers.” It was then back to Shell Point for some rest and relaxation.

To your editor, one of the selling points of the trip was the possibility of photographing some new live specimens for the club’s web pages. However, a general shortage of available time on such a short trip (as well as shelling locations and live shells) made this task quite difficult – not to mention the persistent high winds and a tide which appeared to never go out.

Using a strong flashlight, on Friday evening your editor spotted a suitable live *Melongena corona* (Gmelin, 1791) [Crown Conch] in the “lagoon” at Shell Point. The only rub was that in order to retrieve it for photography, one must drop five feet into the water from the top of a five-foot, strait-sided concrete wall. Getting out again was not a given without a lot of upper body strength. Fortunately, gravity was defied this date but unfortunately the specimen was lethargic and not a suitable photography candidate.

The next evening (Saturday night following the repast at Perkins Restaurant), another more active Crown Conch specimen was seen at the same location. However, a middle-aged person can defy gravity only so often so it was a pass at this time and off to another “safer” location on San Carlos Bay where the winds raged and the seas surged.

Nothing new was found but a definite “mooring sound” was heard during the solitary late night visit. Initially it was thought that this sound was imagined, but about three minutes later, it was heard again. A quick survey of the rough seas with the flashlight revealed nothing out of the ordinary. Eerie it was to be sure – a Manatee maybe?

So it was back to the room where almost immediately the phone rang. It was Pam who said that she and Carol had been at the Shell Point Marina, nonchalantly walking along, when something large jumped into the water severely startling them (read screams), and they wanted me to accompany them to the marina with my flashlight to see if it could be ascertained exactly what it was (creature from the black lagoon maybe).

Seeing an opportunity, it was iterated that my cooperation would requite them accompanying me to the Shell Point Lagoon to “rescue” the Crown Conch and me if I couldn’t climb out of the lagoon. It turns out that their help wasn’t necessary but it was nice to have someone there just in case. Spending a windy night in the water wasn’t too appealing.

It was then off to the marina where the earlier event couldn’t be replicated despite Carol’s marching up-and-down the boardwalk, stomping her feet, as Pam and I observed with the flashlight from an offshore finger-pier. As a somewhat disinterested observer, I suspect the following in order of probabilities:

1. Fish jumping & startled (Mullet). Large specimens were in fact seen.
2. Fish (Mullet) being eaten by sharks/barracuda
3. Manatee\Dolphin (as seen previously in the same area)
4. Unknown creature from the lagoon, which had been awaiting Pam and Carol’s arrival for the sole purpose of startling them.

As a bonus, as we left the marina, a large land snail was found crawling across the sidewalk that turned out to be a *Zachrysia provisoria* (Pfeiffer, 1858) [Garden Zachrysia]. Encouraged by this surprise find, a full island search was then conducted for other terrestrials which did yield an unidentified snake lying in the middle of the sidewalk, but nothing else. It would appear that snake collecting at Shell Point could be quite good as it was the second encountered during the my late night roaming – and I wasn’t even looking for them.

The next morning, again, it was again every group for themselves. Some left for home while others returned to the island for more shopping/shelling.

Overall it was an interesting and busy trip. But when all’s said and done, “There’s no place like home!”

Note: This article, accompanied by several color images, can be viewed at www.jaxshells.org/sanibel.htm.

JSC Web Pages Update

As we go to press, the Jacksonville Shell Club’s presence on the Internet is rapidly approaching 1,400 pages – quite amazing considering our humble start with a single page in February 1998. This expansion of information available on our web site represents many thousands of hours of work (and significant monetary expenditure) by many people who share a common goal (both club members and just friends) – get information on shells freely available to the masses without worrying about making a profit or claiming copyright for their work.

Some of the more recent significant additions are a complete pictorial of Florida’s *Liguus* tree snails being spearheaded by club friend Phil Poland of Clearwater and Harry G. Lee’s “Western Atlantic Olivellinae And Relatives” – an expanded version of the presentation given at the Conchologists of America Convention in Melbourne last year. Both of these projects are in the construction phase as the amount of work to be done is significant and time consuming.

Because of the cost of color printing in regards to the *Shell-O-Gram*, the web pages give us the opportunity to augment the hard-copy newsletter with pictures we couldn’t afford to actually print, considering our distribution.

If you are not on-line you are really missing out – and not just the club web pages. There is a plethora of information available out there on virtually ever topic imaginable. Don’t delay; it’s not that difficult. If my own mother can go on-line for the first time at the age of 73 (and easily master it with no previous experience), believe me, anyone can do it!