



SHELL-O-GRAM

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May Meeting

The Thursday May 27th meeting will convene at 7:00 PM at our new meeting place, the St. Nicholas Park Christian Church at 3226 Beach Blvd; this is very near where Atlantic and Beach Blvds. join and is across from the Curry Thomas Hardware Store.

Mary Reynolds will present a hands-on program dealing with the shore-dwelling mollusks of Alaska. Mary's parents visited the 49th state recently and were charged with the responsibility of collecting material to grow their daughter's specialty collection of periwinkles (Littorinidae), and they exceeded expectations. We'll all get to share Mary's good fortune as she intends to bring an assortment of the booty with her as visual (and tactile) aids.

Bill Frank, our webmaster, will present the Shell-Of-The-Month, which will actually be a composite of offshore Alaskan mollusks collected and photographed by biologist Roger Clark. Roger has been involved in dredging along the Aleutian Chain and has shared his experiences through electronic imaging and communication. The product of his collaboration with Bill is the largest and finest web-based portfolio of Alaskan mollusks in cyberspace ... and it's all on the Jacksonville Shell Club Website.

June Meeting

The Thursday, June 24th meeting of the Jacksonville Shell Club will again be held at the St. Nicholas Park Christian Church at 7:00 PM.

Harry Lee will present the educational program. His topic will be the subfamily Rissoiinae in the western Atlantic. This group of micro- to small marine snails receives little and generally inaccurate attention in the popular shell media despite being a fairly large and manageable group. Harry hopes to have slides of all known species and maybe some un-named ones as well.

There will be no Shell-Of-The-Month to allow time for discussion of the up-coming (July 16-18) shell show.



President's Message

By Billie Brown

Hi Everybody. We had a good two months since our last newsletter. Our "pot luck" supper and meeting in March were great. We had a good supper and time to visit and a successful meeting after. Dr Lee gave us an overall view of "the book" with a question and answer time. Everyone who had questions these last months seemed to have been reassured and their questions answered. Thanks Harry! [Continued on page two.]



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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: Charlotte M. Lloyd
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Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250-2883

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.

Welcome New Member

William DiBrino
P. O. Box 210101
Auburn Hills, MI 48321

Address Change

Linda Haack & Family
11244 Laurel Glen Ct.
Tigard, Oregon 97224

President's Message [continued]

In April we had our first meeting at the church in St. Nicholas. There were only about 20 in attendance. The pastor there was very gracious and we felt welcome. The facilities are more than adequate and we should be grateful to have such a nice meeting place. Those in attendance missed a really well done presentation by Charlotte on her trip to Panama. We always enjoy traveling with Charlotte.

Claire Newsome passed out shell show fliers and represented the club at the function at Tree Hill on May 2nd. Thanks Claire and to any helpers you may have

had. Thanks to Sea & Earth Treasures for sponsoring our \$15 table fee.

Claire is an excellent example of the workers in our small membership. She always goes the "extra mile." Thanks also to the ladies who took "pots" to help in making the center pieces for table decoration at the shell show banquet. Please – don't wait for us to have to make a special request for help for the shell show! We will need everybody helping by doing more than just their job! Plans are going well but there is a lot to do!

We have been missing a lot of people at our meetings. Why? Where are you? – Please come back!

See you next meeting. Meanwhile, suggestions, observations, complaints or anything to make our club function better are welcome. Call me! Best, Billie (241-3755).

Giant African Snails Seized From Wisconsin Schools



Image by Bill Frank

During April, federal health officials seized Giant African Snails [*Achatina fulica* (Bowdich, 1822) – pictured above in both its sinistral and dextral forms] from school classrooms in several Wisconsin cities including Big Bend, Menasha and Milwaukee and have started a national search for this exotic pest which reproduces rapidly, destroys plants and can transmit meningitis. The snails, which are illegal to have in the United States, were used in classrooms by unwitting school officials. Five of the snails at one Elementary School had been donated by a parent but were later seized after teachers learned they were illegal.

Federal authorities are concerned the snails, about the size of a person's hand, could be transported to states with warmer climates, where they can rapidly reproduce and destroy plants. Snail smugglers can face fines of up

to \$1,000 per charge.

Scientists consider the Giant African Snail to be one of the most damaging land snails in the world. Luckily, it has not yet established a foothold in the continental United States, even though that almost happened at least twice.

Originally from an area south of the Sahara in East Africa, this snail has established itself in Asia and the Indo-Pacific Islands, including Hawaii. The two near misses took place in California just after World War II and in Miami, FL, in 1966.

In the Florida incident, a young boy returning from Hawaii smuggled three snails into Miami as pets. His grandmother eventually released the snails into her garden. Seven years later, more than 18,000 snails had been found along with lots of eggs. It took the State of Florida almost 10 years and cost more than \$1 million to rid itself of this slow but persistent pest.

Compared to our native snails, this foreign pest is very large - about 8 inches (200 mm.) long overall with the shell making up half its length. It is also showy, with a light-brown shell striped with brown and cream bands.

Two qualities make this tropical snail especially dangerous here. First, it can survive cold conditions and even snow by aestivating. This means that the snail will become slow and sluggish, essentially hibernating until warm weather returns. Theoretically, it could live in most of the United States.

Second, the Giant African Snail is a whiz at reproduction. Each snail contains both female and male reproductive organs, and after a single mating session, each snail can produce a batch of 100 to 400 eggs. And it can keep this up several more times without having to mate again. In a typical year, every mated adult lays about 1,200 eggs. The species can live as long as nine years, and that is plenty of time to cause trouble in the local environment.

One of the threats posed by the Giant African Snail is not what it eats, but what it carries. This pest can be a vector for human diseases such as eosinophilic meningitis. This disease is passed along by rat lungworm parasites that can be found on the snail. If the snail is eaten raw or isn't completely cooked, diners eating Giant African Snails might get the rat lungworm parasite as a side dish without knowing it—and meningitis for dessert.

Another threat is the voracious snail's appetite. It is known to eat at least 500 different types of plants, including breadfruit, cassava, cocoa, papaya, peanut, rubber, and most varieties of beans, peas, cucumbers, and melons. Unlike people, Giant African Snails are never picky eaters. If vegetables or fruits are not available, the snails will munch on a wide variety of

ornamental plants and even tree bark. The entire world's a buffet table to this snail.

Danger! Snail On The Prowl



Bill Frank Photo

Here in northeast Florida the temperature has warmed considerably over the past month, spring is in the air, and quite likely there is a sex-charged killer lurking outside your door. This fearsome beast is none other than the Rosy Wolfsnail [*Euglandina rosea* (Férussac, 1821) – pictured above].

Euglandina rosea is the largest terrestrial snail found in northeast Florida and is the only of our recorded 70 native species which feeds on other snails. The natural range of this species is the Southeast United States where it can grow to a length of over 60 mm. Henry Augustus Pilsbry (1946 - Land Mollusca of North America (North of Mexico)) recorded a 76 mm. specimen from Palatka but normally the specimens found locally are much smaller (40-50 mm. range). Long recognized by man for its prowess in hunting down and killing other snails, *Euglandina rosea* has been intentionally introduced to a variety of islands in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, Bermuda, and the Bahamas ostensibly to control undesirable snail species such as the Giant African Snail [*Achatina fulica* (Bowdich, 1822)]. To put it succinctly, these introductions haven't worked out as they were envisioned. The *Euglandina* have been blamed for the extinction of endemic local species, and have been heavily implicated in the extinction or at least decline of other species of snails wherever they have been introduced, notably in Hawaii.

Considering all the tales of woe associated with this species, one might be inclined to believe that the lawns and forests of northeast Florida are literally over-run with *Euglandina*. However, based upon the experiences of this scribe, that is certainly not the case. In fourteen years of "snailing" my extensive yard as well as those of my neighbors and other adjacent environs, less than two dozen specimens have been found. Whether this low number found is a result of them being somewhat rare or because they keep a low profile, is not entirely clear at this point.

My latest foray into the world of the Rosy Wolfsnail began during a balmy evening this past March on my front patio when in the darkness I kicked “something” crawling across the outdoor carpet. Fortunately, this “something” turned out to be an adult *Euglandina rosea* and not a “something” which bites. From past experience I knew that when one finds a single *Euglandina* on the prowl there are likely others nearby. This was born out soon enough when two additional specimens were quickly located in other parts of the yard. The threesome was transferred to a covered bucket for storage while a five-gallon terrarium was prepared for more permanent observations.

Far from being stressed by their temporary new home, the *Euglandina* immediately seized on the opportunity of like companionship by immediately mating. This is an observation I’ve made in the past when I was fortunate enough to have collected a pair at the same time. The actual mating is usually preceded by some tentacle waving and caressing – a mating ritual of sorts.

Through diligent searching over the following week, two additional *Euglandina* were found and added to the terrarium. With each new terrarium introduction, the established residents mated with the newcomers. While most mating events involved two snails, threesomes were also observed.



Bradybaena similaris (Férussac, 1821) – Bill Frank Photo

Keeping the five fed has proven to be a daunting task – especially with the year’s dry weather. My success in finding the *Euglandina* is more than likely due in part to the fact that my immediate neighborhood is over-run with the alien Asian Tramp Snail [*Bradybaena similaris* (Férussac, 1821)]; a medium sized (up to about 12 mm.) species. This species has proven to be the *Euglandina*’s preferred prey. Despite the fact that Assistant Editor Harry Lee has dissected the guts of *Euglandina* and found the remains of our local small Meadow Slug [*Deroceras laeve* (Müller, 1774)] and other small snails, my fearsome five have ignored the Meadow Slugs and smaller snail species that they were offered preferring instead the *Bradybaena*.

Observing the *Euglandina* on the prowl for food is a study in efficiency. Their ability to quickly find the prey combined with their speed (yes some snails are rather

quick) makes the whole event rather brief and showcases all the traits which led to their ill-advised world-wide introductions. In the case of the Asian Tramp Snails, they are reduced to an empty well cleaned shell in minutes. No matter how many live specimens were introduced into the terrarium prior to retiring; only empty shells remained the next morning.



Deroceras laeve (Müller, 1774) – Bill Frank Photo

Considering that the group spends an inordinate amount of time tending to the business of reproduction (as well as feeding), I’m hoping that in the future that eggs and baby *Euglandina* may be on the agenda. Only time will tell.

Club member Carol Ruckdeschel of Cumberland Island, Georgia reports that *Euglandina* are quite common on the island and she has found their eggs which are similar to lizard eggs, which is what she thought they were initially.



Three *Euglandina* mating – Bill Frank Photo

On the Internet see:

<http://www.jaxshells.org/where.htm>

<http://www.jaxshells.org/eraj.htm>