

# Shell and Tell

The newsletter of the Gulf Coast Shell Club



*Argopecten irradians concentricus* (Say, 1822)

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January-February 2024

## President's Message



President  
Phyllis Bernard

We have a great club! Members are interested in collecting, cleaning shells, protecting habitats, identifying the shells and making sure the data is correct. That is the fun part of the club, but it is the other part of a club I would like to thank the members for. Taking time and preparing a great program, good refreshments, and the hard work put into running a shell show are also important.

It's a new year, time to sign up for programs and refreshments, and start thinking about your displays for the shell show then dreaming about your next trip to the beach.

*Phyllis*

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# Happy New Year!

May all the shells you find  
be gem!



### Club Officers:

President - Phyllis Bernard  
Vice President - Dave Clausen  
Secretary - Susan Cole/D. J. Moore  
Corresponding Secretary - Luke Cooley  
Treasurer - Jim Brunner/Brant Holman  
Tides - Scott Dilbeck  
Membership - Phyllis Bernard  
Librarian - Kathy Dilbeck  
Newsletter - Linda Brunner  
Raffle - Don Kittsmiller  
Nametags - Ernie Bernard/D. J. Moore

# When Shelling is Best in the Northern Gulf of Mexico

or

## Baby It's Cold Out There!

It is cold out there!

That said, the worse the weather- the better the shell collecting! If you are a Coquina collector (*Donax variabilis* Say, 1822) it would seem now is your time. See photos below. Collected at Inlet Beach, FL near Camp Helen this morning, on 1/20/2024, the little guys are washing up in large quantities and have sadly passed away. However, their shells are available for the taking.

“Various” colors and patterns, some striking are there and most are 15-20mm. in size. For those brave souls I would recommend at least a 3/2 wetsuit (if you plan on touching that water in the cold) plus 2 to 3 layers of clothing and certainly insulated gloves, the diver variety. It would be easy to get frost bite or hypothermia- limiting water contact is the key- not staying out too long in the cold weather is also a good idea.

This is a known tourist area but the competition from shell collectors was sparse likely due to the cold weather. The public beach access point coming from PCB is just across the county line (Walton Co.) on left before reaching 30A.

Collecting for these bivalves should be good throughout the day (warmest between 1-3pm- 46 to 49 degrees) the tide will be rising. Low tide is around 3am, -0.9 and high tide around 4:45pm, 1.4. You are aided by a northeast wind. LOL If you could pass on to the “polar bear” shell collectors in the club. This location is also in the Amshoffs’ “neck of the woods”. Have fun and stay warm!

Brant Holman



Anyone want to take a stab at identifying the stranger in the midst of the donax?



**GULF COAST SHELL CLUB  
2023 PROGRAMS AND REFRESHMENTS**

or  
Ways to expand your mind and waistline simultaneously!

<b>MONTH</b>	<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>REFRESHMENTS</b>
February	Jim Brunner	Phyllis & Ernie Bernard
March	Open	Open
April	Dave Clausen	Open
May	Open	Open

## *Coming Events*

**Last Chance for Cedar Key.** The February Field Trip to Cedar Key will be on 8-10 February. Lodging will be at Park Place at Cedar Key, 211 Second Street, (352) 543-5737. Mention you are with the shell club to get the discounted rate. A group of rooms has been reserved for us but that block will be released at noon on the 24th. We have a boat trip laid on for 7 AM Friday morning to Seahorse Key. The price is \$35.00 per person and only 2 seats are left. Saturday we will visit the sandbar by the Beachfront Motel (still in recovery from the hurricane) to search for Angel Wings. We'll plan on getting together on Friday night for dinner (and Saturday for those staying over until Sunday). The grocery store in Cedar Key is still closed so you need to stock up prior to arrival.

**January 27-28, 2024**

**56th Annual Broward Shell Show, Pompano Beach, FL**

E. Pat Larkins Community Center

520 NW 3rd Street, Pompano Beach, FL

Contact: Alice Pace; email: [alicepace90@att.net](mailto:alicepace90@att.net) Tel: 305-301-1296

Website: [browardshellclub.org](http://browardshellclub.org)

**February 9-10, 2024**

**60th Annual Sarasota Shell Show, Sarasota, FL**

Potter Building at Roberts Arena, 2896 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL

Contact: Ron Bopp; email: [rbopp1@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:rbopp1@tampabay.rr.com)

Tel: 918-527-0589

Website: [sarasotashellclub.com](http://sarasotashellclub.com)

**February 16-18, 2024**

**17th Australian National Shell Show; (3rd Seashell Extravaganza)**

Fremantle, Western Australia

Make sure your passport is up to date before you buy your tickets. A good way to warm up as it's summer there..

**February 23-24, 2024**

**75th St. Petersburg Shell Show**

Seminole Recreation Center

9100 113th Street North, Seminole, Florida

Website: [stpeteshellclub.org](http://stpeteshellclub.org)

Facebook; email: [stpeteshellclub@gmail.com](mailto:stpeteshellclub@gmail.com)



## NIFTY NOMENCLATURE

Mary Ellen Akers

Shell names can drive you crazy. They often are named after people, or the place where they were collected, or even after the author's cat or something equally obtuse! If the label of such a shell becomes separated from its shell, you're sunk! Unless you are gifted with instant recall or photographic memory, you'll have to research the label name and find a good drawing or photo of the wayward shell, to be able to reunite the label and shell.

Don't lose heart! Many shells are named quite descriptively. And although their names are still Latin and occasionally Greek words, with a little sleuthing, you can figure out the meanings of the genus and/or the s'z, without a dictionary. For example, this charming shell is *Trigonostoma pellucida* Perry, 1811. It's a member of the Cancellariidae Family. According to its label, it was collected at night in tangle nets set in water between 140 and 160 meters deep, off Panglao Island, Bohol, in the Philippines.



**Trigonostoma! Yikes! 12 letters!** Let's break it in half. Trigon. Does it remind you of any other words? Pentagon, hexagon, octagon? How many sides? 5, 6, 8. Hmm. Tri -- how many sides might that be? Triangle, triple, triplets, triad, trio, tricycle. This is SO hard! Let's go wild, and guess 3!

**O?** I think it's tossed in there to make it easier to pronounce.

**Stoma?** You might remember from our educational shell vocabulary papers, that stoma means mouth or opening.

Thus -- **tah-dah!** Tri-gon-o-stoma means Three-Sided Mouth! That at least puts you in the proper genus! See if one of your unidentified spare shells might have a Three-Sided Mouth! Yes, there are other Trigonostomas, including the spectacular *T. milleri*; and it too has a three-sided mouth.

Pellucida has come into English, although most of us have never used the word pellucid, which, among a variety of definitions, means clear or translucent. This whitish shell is not thick or dense; and if you hold it to the light, it is translucent.

Here is another view of *Trigonostoma pellucida*. Enjoy it's 3-sided mouth!



(From **Shorelines**, newsletter of Suncoast Conchologists, January 2024)

**Editor's note:** There is nothing as permanent as change and in the world or shell nomenclature that is true. This species is now known as *Trigonostoma scalare* (Gmelin, 1791). Scalare refers to the barred pattern on the body. Probably the most famous shell called scalare is the wentletrap, *Epitonium scalare* (Linnaeus, 1758), the infamous Precious Wentletrap.



## ***New Florida Species Named in Honor of Jimmy Buffett***

Worm snails are unusual gastropods in that they spend most of their life as sessile organisms. Like oysters, once the larvae or juveniles find a home, they permanently cement themselves to a substrate and never move again. They feed by filtering water across their gills. Easy prey for many predators, their main forms of defense are strong low-profile shells or long, thin shells that extend deep into the sediment.

In a study by Rudiger Bieler and many coauthors, five new species are described, one of which was named in honor of the late, great, Jimmy Buffet: *Cayo margarita* n. sp. (type locality = Florida Keys). They lack a powerful operculum, but instead deploy aposematic coloration which serves as both camouflage and a warning. The authors postulate that this genus might be able to deploy a mucous net with chemical defense to deter predators.

(From **Shorelines**, newsletter of Suncoast Conchologists, January 2024)

The entire article with pictures can be read at: <http://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.15854>



## ***The Saga of The Frozen Dip Net***

by Jim Brunner

Our story begins on a cold January day in 1980. New shellers to the Florida Panhandle, Linda and Jim Brunner, decided the temperature (in the teens) be damned; it was time to go shelling. And so, in the dreary pre-dawn hours, our intrepid adventurers (long on valor but perhaps a bit short on wisdom) set off for Port St Joe, Florida to catch a favorable low tide. As the sun rose there were sand flats and shallowly submerged grass beds out to the horizon.

Unfortunately, the bitter temperature had frozen solid the top 1/8 inch of water. So, while you could clearly see the shells under the ice, you couldn't get to them. This is where the dip net begins to play its heroic role in our story. Using the handle it was possible to break a hole in the ice large enough to insert the net portion. Of course, this action stirred up sediment so it was necessary to rake along the bottom in an attempt to grab your shell. Then you would lift the net and find out what you had captured.

There is where the word "frozen" enters the awards title. Between the cold temperature and the blowing wind, by the time you had brought the net up to eye level the mesh had frozen in position, concealing your treasure, and creating a struggle to open the net to get it out.

Thus, the Frozen Dip Net Award goes to those hardy shellers that are willing to brave the wilds of northwest Florida under the most adverse conditions of heat or cold to find their shells.

**Note:** Congratulations to Gary Gordon on winning this award at our latest show. He inquired how the award was created and, thus, this story.





# COA 2024 SHELL-OLYMPICS



Hilton Melbourne  
200 Rialto Place  
Melbourne, Florida

PRE CONVENTION FIELD TRIPS:

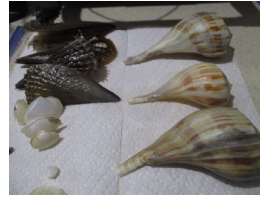
June 11

PROGRAMS: June 12-14

BOURSE June 15-16

While making shell plans don't forget COA, Conchologists of America is scheduled for June in Melbourne, Florida. There have been some changes but the show will go on. The pre convention field trips have been cancelled but there is still plenty to do if you want to go early and explore. Wildlife sites and the space center are two areas to check into. During the convention there are programs, silent auctions, the Bourse and the oral auction. All are filled with fun and information. When registering at the hotel the information has changed to: PH 321-768-0200. Use Group Code COA24.

## Members Shell



Brant's impromptu shelling trip taking advantage of a very low January tide netted the above!



Before it got too cold and short sleeves were still comfortable Carol found two species of pen shells on the same day on the same beach!



Deep diving, spear fishing Bob Stapleton came up with this unusual combo that were attached to each other, a shallow water Cross-barred Venus (*Chione elevata* (Say, 1822)) and the deeper water Kitten's Paw (*Plicatula gibbosa* Lamarck, 1801).



Happy Valentine's Day!