

Suncoast Shorelines

September-October 2020

PUBLISHED BY SUNCOAST CONCHOLOGISTS

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President's Message

September is here and it is time to begin a new Suncoast Conchologists year. I hope everyone has had a good summer and that you are well and staying safe and looking forward to a new shell club year. This October marks the 36th Anniversary of the founding of the Suncoast Conchologists Shell Club and we are fortunate to have three of the founding members still in our club – Carolyn and Earl Petrikin and Mary Ellen Akers.

Due to the continuing escalation of positive cases of COVID-19 in Florida, our new year is being impacted like last year ended. Unfortunately, we will not be able to have our regular physical meetings for September and October and very probably for November. The church where we meet is taking precautions to protect its members and we cannot use the rec hall for the foreseeable future. This is also in the best interest of the safety, health and welfare of our members.

HOWEVER, all is not lost. Your Board has been busy planning how to deal with these current events and has come up with what we feel is a viable solution. We will be having **virtual** meetings, primarily programs, using ZOOM. (*The only drawback to this approach is that you will have to furnish your own refreshments.*) I will be sending out more details on using ZOOM prior to our September 1 meeting. Any necessary business that must be taken care of by the membership, like approval of the Budget for the new year, will be handled through email as we did the election of officers for this year.

I want to remind everyone that if you are not a Life Member, your dues is due now for the 2020-21 year. The renewal form is in this Shorelines. Fill it out and

mail it in ASAP to the address listed on the form. We will need your information to do the Directory for this year and to keep you on our distribution list for upcoming programs and events.

If you know anyone who has a shell collection or collector shells they would like to donate, Suncoast Conchologists Shell Club is interested. Please contact us through our email suncoastseashells@gmail.com.

Here's to the hope of a great new year! Stay safe.
Looking forward to seeing you online September 1.

Nancy

PLAN AHEAD

Tuesday, September 1, 2020, 7PM - Suncoast Conchologists Shell Club *and* the St. Petersburg Shell Club will be hosting a **ZOOM** Program. Rebecca Mensch MS, Aquarium Curator from the Bailey-Mathews National Shell Museum, will present a program on ZOOM, "Search for the Live Junonia". This presentation is about the research cruise she went on in 2018 as a guest scientist to collect live Junonias to study.

E-mails will be sent to all club members only, with instructions on how to set up **ZOOM** on your computer.

Tuesday, October 6, 2020, 7PM - Debi McCreary will present "Shifting Sands of Time". She will talk about the different sands all over the state of Florida. This will take place via **ZOOM**. An email will be sent to members prior to the meeting date.

Suncoast Conchologists
(Founded in 1984)

P.O. Box 1564 Palm Harbor, Florida
34682-1564

Suncoast Shorelines is issued five times per year to all members. Annual Membership with emailed newsletters: \$20 Family, \$15 Individual, \$10 Junior. Lifetime membership is available. Add \$10 if you would like a printed copy of the newsletters. The club *usually* meets the first Tuesday of every month (except June, July, August, and December) at 7:00pm, at Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Avenue, Clearwater. Currently the meetings at Grace Lutheran Church have been suspended until further notice. Meetings will be held virtually by way of ZOOM.

Articles, comments and suggestions for publication are solicited and should be sent directly to the Editor: shellgirl@windstream.net

Closing Date for publication is the 15th of the month prior to the Sept, Nov, Jan, Mar, and May meetings.

Permission is hereby granted to reprint articles published in the newsletter providing the original author is acknowledged, and a copy of the reprinted material is sent to Suncoast Conchologists.

2020-2021 Officers

President Nancy Holcombe

First Vice President Sharlene Totten

Second Vice President Steve Geiger

Recording Secretary Marion Fuller/Vicki Eis

Treasurer Pat Snair

Corresponding Secretary Elda Thomas

E-Mail: suncoastseashells@gmail.com

Website: www.suncoastconchologists.org

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2020-2021 COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

COA Representative	Mary Ellen Akers
Education	Mary Ellen Akers
E-Mail	Nancy Holcombe
FaceBook	Cheryl Jacobs
Field Trips	Steve Geiger
Hospitality	Cathy Petre
Library	Shirley Anderson
Membership	Betty Scheetz
Mini-Box Displays	Vicki Eis
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Photography	John Jacobs
Programs	Sharlene Totten
Projectionist	John Jacobs
Publicity	Elda Thomas
Raffle	Anita Freudenthal
Refreshments	Cheryl Putnam
Website	Cheryl Jacobs

NEGATIVE or LOW TIDES for Egmont Key

September 2020

Sun	13 th	-0.1	4:34	PM
Mon	14 th	-0.2	5:12	PM
Tues	15 th	-0.2	5:48	PM
Wed	16 th	-0.1	6:20	PM
Sat	19 th	-0.2	7:30	AM
Sun	20 th	-0.2	8:23	AM
Mon	21 st	-0.2	9:22	AM

October

Fri	16 th	-0.1	5:51	AM
Sat	17 th	-0.4	6:37	AM
Sun	18 th	-0.5	7:26	AM
Mon	19 th	-0.5	8:17	AM
Tues	20 th	-0.4	9:14	AM
Wed	21 st	-0.2	10:18	AM

But remember, the low at St. Petersburg occurs almost 2½ hours after the low at Egmont Key, but Clearwater Beach is very similar, about 10 minutes behind Egmont....

http://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/tide_predictions.html

Honeymoon Island Reopens

On May 4, the Pinellas County beaches reopened, and the shellers, myself included, descended on Honeymoon Island like a swarm of locusts. After all, the beaches had been closed for six weeks. There had been lots of high winds and several bad storms during that time. Expectations were high. By the time the park gate opened at 8:00 AM, cars were lined up from the gate to the drawbridge on the Dunedin Causeway and maybe beyond. (I was stuck at the bridge onto the island, having arrived at 7:30, and could not really see beyond the drawbridge.)

It was an exciting time to hit the beach early. However, to paraphrase from Phantom of the Opera (my favorite musical), "Far too many folks for my taste and most of them shelling." Some had masks but most were without. Caught up in the shelling frenzy, many were not observing distancing. There were a lot of sheriff deputies and park rangers around the area to watch happenings. I did not stay very long. The only things I found of real interest to me are the sea urchins in my picture. I have never before found any on Honeymoon.

Unfortunately, Honeymoon has not been issuing after-hours passes since reopening so I have not been back much. I really prefer to go early, early morning before park opens and avoid the crowds. Of course, if a good storm comes along with a low tide in the morning, I may make another trip to check out the shelling.

Nancy Holcombe



A variety of shells found on Honeymoon Island



Many people came out to hunt for "treasures"



Honeymoon Island - Prior to Covid

Royal Blue & the Color Purple

by Dick Jackson

Since the invention of aniline dyes in the early decades of the 19th Century, we've tended to take color for granted. So it's easy to forget that, for most of human existence, the basic color of garb was drab.

In the prehistoric world, color was an evanescent commodity: the "rosy-fingered dawn," the rainbow spectrum, the blossoms of the field, with color as ephemeral as the blossoms themselves. Color was the fingerprints of the gods.

So it's not surprising that, in the ancient world, exorbitant colors became the symbol divine right and the exalted status of the most elite strata of society. Not simply the law of supply and demand, but the laws of the lands prohibited commoners from venturing to wear it.

Ochre and russet could be obtained from common clay, and were suitable for homespun. But the silken robes of kings and high priests of the temple were another matter. Our expressions, "royal blue," "born to the purple," derive from that memory. The purple, known variously as Tyrian purple, royal purple, and imperial purple, was not quite purple. It was more a blood-red purple, magenta.

Commodities, in the ancient world, varied in value by location. Gold, plentiful in Egypt, was worth less than silver there. In Greece, the values were reversed. The 4th Century BCE historian Theopompus wrote "Purple for dyes

fetches its weight in silver at Colophon." Vitruvius, writing in the first Century BCE, reported that "Purple exceeds all colors in costliness and superiority of its delightful effect." One of its effects was its uncanny quality of becoming more intense after exposure to sunlight and weather.

Unlike the colors obtained from precious minerals such as lapis lazuli, turquoise, and malachite, royal purple was obtained from the mucous secretion of the hypobranchial gland of *Bolinus brandaris* (Linnaeus, 1758) – the spiny dye murex. This mollusk was assiduously harvested by the Phoenicians to feed the sartorial appetites of royalty across the known world. Kings, apparently, liked their subjects to see them coming.

Archeologists have uncovered evidence that the dye process was discovered by the Minoans of Crete centuries before the dye was produced, on an industrial scale, in the Phoenician port city of Tyre, which also exported the other precious commodities of the ancient world: glass, and the imperishable holy wood of Egypt, Lebanon cedar, of which the Ark of the Covenant was also constructed.

In later centuries, the court of Byzantium enforced a monopoly on the precious dye.

In his *Natural History*, Pliny the Elder reported that production of Tyrian dye involved macerating the gland of the animal and steeping it for three days in a solution of salt water, then boiling it down, reducing it to a liquefied state. As can be imagined, the hot sun of the Levant rendered this process extremely noisome. Sailors approaching Tyre were said to encounter its hideous stench hours before the busy port came into view.

Other marine gastropods from which dye could be extracted (and blended) were *Hexaplex trunculus* Linnaeus, 1758 – the banded dye-murex, and *Stramonita haemastoma* (whose very name evokes blue blood.)

On February 28, 2011, the New York Times reported that Dr. Zvi C. Koren, a professor specializing in the analytical chemistry of ancient colorants, announced that he discovered the Jewish holy color, *tekhelet*, a blue indigo used to dye the priestly robes of the Jerusalem temple, in a 2000-year-old scrap of bluish-purple yarn embroidery found at Massada, Herod's Desert Fortress, where Jewish Zealots under Eleazar ben Yair ended their lives at their own hands in 79 C.E., after a harrowing siege, rather than be overrun by the Tenth Legion under Cornelius Flavius Silva.

Doctor Koren has determined that *tekhelet* was not sky-blue (not incidentally, the color of the Israeli national flag) as was previously speculated upon by rabbinical scholars, including Maimonides and Rashi, but rather indigo, the color of the midnight sky. It, too, was extracted from a lowly sea snail, *Murex trunculus*. The Times reports that "some in ancient times claimed it [the dye] was worth 20 times its weight in gold."

As conchologists, we treasure the shells, and toss the critters.

It was not always so.



This article appeared in the May 2011 issue of *Suncoast Shorelines*.

""AN AFTERNOON IN THE FLORIDA KEYS

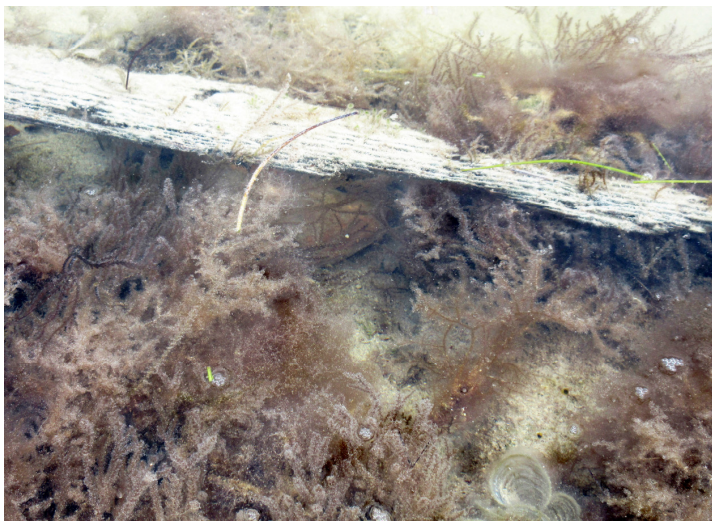
"""" And a New Name!

By Carolyn Petrikin

During our week in Key West this past June, we headed up to the Ohio-Missouri Key area to catch a low tide. This has become one of our favorite places over the past thirty years of visiting the Keys—you never know just what you might find there! Over the years we've seen many different shells and various sea life, at times even returning home with some for our salt water aquarium.

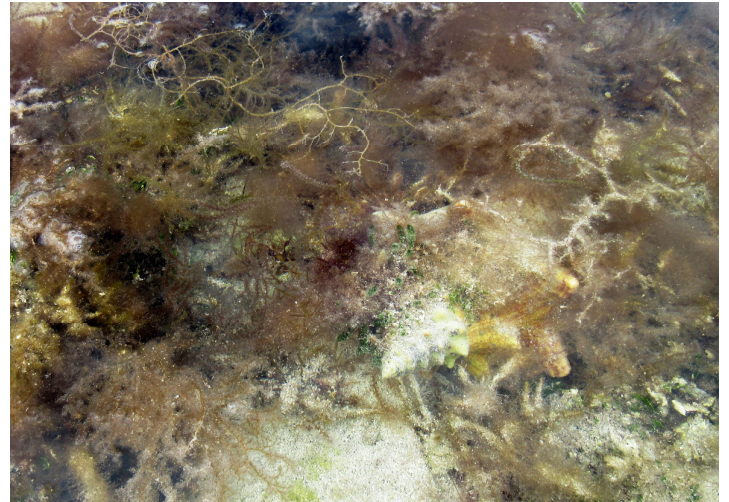
While wandering around this very large area, mostly in shallow water, we turn over rocks, look under boards, among the grass and sand, not knowing what might be there—plus—always looking for things to photograph. You never know what you might see!

In June we found not just one or two, but three beautiful sub-adult Queen Conchs! They were all well hidden on sand under grass—even one under a board in the grass! After seeing the first one, within 15-20 minutes there were several others to photograph, then return to their hiding places.

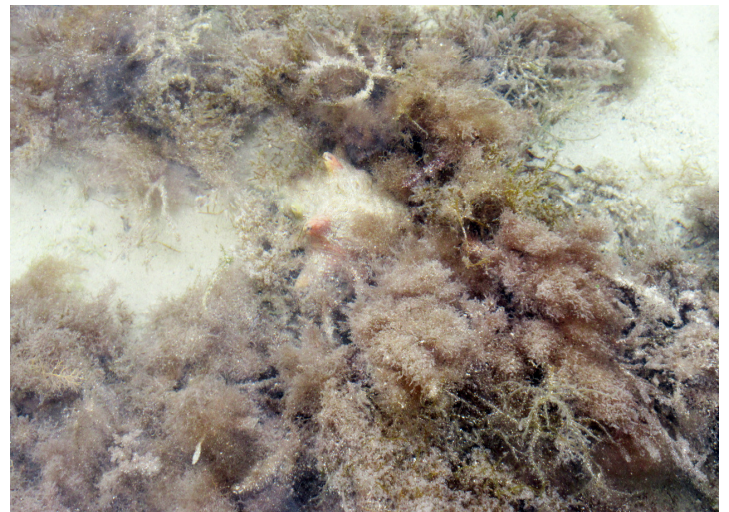


"I wonder if there's anything under that board?"

Some years ago, Queen Conchs were found in high numbers in the Florida Keys; however, due to a collapse in conch fisheries in the 1970's, it is now illegal to harvest these living molluscs anywhere in Florida. It is not unlawful to possess Queen Conch shells as long as the shells do not contain any living mollusc at the time they're collected. This species has been on the Endangered Species List (Cites) since 1992.



After moving the board and feeling around in the grass, a Queen Conch was "hiding"!



What's hiding in the grass?

And now—a name change for this lovely member of the Strombidae Family! Yes, while looking up information for another shell, I just happened to come across an article regarding our Queen of the Conchs. As of May 2020, *Strombus gigas* is now in a new Genus—*Aliger*, making the Queen Conch's recognized name *Aliger gigas*. This genus name comes from Aliger Thiele, 1929. No doubt, it will take us a while to get used to our lovely Queen Conch's name—no longer in the Genus *Strombus*!



Happy Birthday



SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

11—Sharlene Totten

2—Barb Stauffer

23---Cathy Petre

21—Earl Petrikin

24—Sally Mitchell

30 --Paul Gysan



A lovely Juvenile Queen Conch!



Ocean Rules

Avoid pier pressure

Be shore of yourself

Don't be a crab

Come out of your shell

Take time to coast

Sea life's beauty

Make waves!



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SUNCOAST CONCHOLOGISTS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Annual Dues with E-mail copy of Suncoast Shorelines

Junior (under 19) \$10.00

Individual: \$15.00

Family \$20.00

Life Membership:

Individual \$150.00

Family \$200.00

For a printed copy of the newsletter, add \$10.00.

The membership year begins September 1st. Please make checks payable to:
SUNCOAST CONCHOLOGISTS, P.O. Box 1564, Palm Harbor, FL 34682-1564

Meetings are held at 7:00 PM the 1st Tuesday of each month except June, July, August and December at Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 North Highland Avenue, Clearwater.

All members please complete and return for our Membership Directory: Date_____

Name(s)*_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip Code_____

Telephone_____ Cell Phone_____

E-Mail Address_____ Birth Date (month & day)_____

If you have an alternate address for part of the year, indicate mailing address and dates below:

Address_____ Dates--(From/To)_____

City_____ State_____ Zip Code_____

E-Mail Address_____ Telephone_____

List all family members included in membership:_____

Membership Category:

() Junior

() Individual

() Family

() Lifetime

Are you paying the extra \$10. for a printed copy? Yes_____ No_____

Return this renewal form with your check to the Membership Chairman at our September meeting or mail to the above P.O. Box address before Oct. 20th.

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PHOTOS!



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