



## A Note From the Editor

Four years ago, *Las Conchas* was reformatted and reconceived with the intent of making it more than simply a shell club newsletter. In its new form, the publication was seen as having a number of basic goals:

- ◆ To inform members about upcoming meetings, programs and events
- ◆ To be a resource for the identification, study and collecting of shells of the Western US and Mexico
- ◆ To provide practical information on shell collecting and curation techniques
- ◆ To present articles of interest to shell collectors of all types, helping each to enhance the quality of their own collecting activity while exposing them to other facets of the fields of malacology and conchology
- ◆ To encourage responsible collecting and
- ◆ To further enhance a sense of community amongst club members and shell collectors in general.

These are all very noble goals and we have been successful in achieving some of them. But, as we move forward, it is essential for us to draw upon the knowl-

edge and experience of our members to help us to function as we originally envisioned.

How can you help? **We need articles and photographs that work towards achieving the goals listed here.**

Please think about contributions you can make. These may include:

- Observations on a single genus or species
- Report on a collecting experience or shell-related travel you have done
- Tips on cleaning, preserving, cataloguing or displaying your shells
- Information on changes in taxonomy
- Review of a shell-related publication
- Pictorial survey a favorite group/family/genus or shell-related items
- Report on current issues related to our field— ocean ecology, etc.

Finally, write a biographical article about yourself and your collecting interests so we can all have a better sense of who we are and why we do what we do.

Together, we can achieve the goals originally set for this publication and continue to make it the resource that we all can find useful and informative.

Thank you in advance,

Phil Liff-Grieff, Editor  
[pliffgrieff@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pliffgrieff@sbcglobal.net)

**Don't forget!!**  
**PCC Winter Holiday Party**  
**December 10 1:00—4:00 pm**

*See page 8 for details*

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**Las Conchas is a publication of the Pacific Conchological Club**

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Treasurer:	Kathy Kalobi		

The Pacific Conchological Club was organized in 2003 as a result of the merger between the Pacific Shell Club and the Conchological Club of Southern California. Its mission is to further the interest in shell collecting and malacology and to provide a forum for individuals who love shells and other marine life. The Club meets on the second Sunday of each month from October through June at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History (900 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles).

### Ocinebrinas: California's "Lesser" Muricids

by Phil Liff-Grieff

California is blessed with a fascinating selection of Muricids, most of which are very popular with collectors. Those in the subfamily Ocenebrinae, however, are lesser known and often less understood. Small and medium sized, these rock-dwellers are usually characterized by scaly spiral sculpture, and denticles inside the outer lip of mature shells. The siphonal canal is narrow or completely closed

In this article, we will feature some of the California members of this subfamily, showing some of the variability that seems to be so characteristic of these species. This survey will begin with species that are more common in Southern California and move northward.

NOTE: The species designations used here are based on the literature cited at the end of this article.



***O. circumtexta* (Stearns, 1871)**  
Cayucos, San Luis Obispo, California  
20.46 mm

### *Ocinebrina circumtexta* (Stearns, 1871)

An extremely attractive denizen of rocky crevices and rocks in the mid tidal zone. *O. circumtexta* is heavily corded and usually white to cream colored with dark brown to black bands on each whorl.

Occasionally, specimens can be found with orangish banding or no bands at all (see the specimens in the photo to the left).

These shells range in height from 15 to 21 mm and can be found from Monterey, California south to Central Baja California, Mexico.

(Continued on page 3)



***Ocinebrina circumtexta*** specimens from Point Vicente, Palos Verdes Peninsula showing a range of color forms. These all have a pale orange base color instead of the usual offwhite. The largest shell is 17.72 mm in height.

Collected by Pearl Snyder in 1962

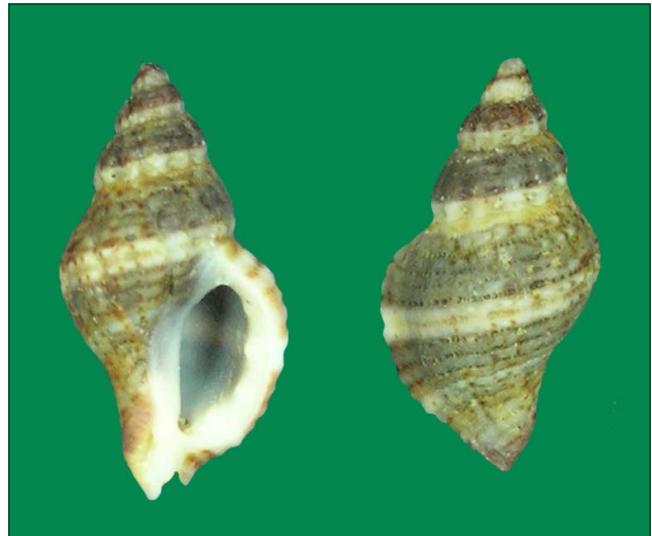
California *Ocinebrinas* (Continued from page 2)

***Ocinebrina gracillima* (Stearns, 1871)**

This small species (9-14 mm) is fairly non-descript, usually brownish-grey in color with a white band on each whorl and some red/brown spotting on the body whorl. Mature specimens have an expanded varix at the lip. This species is relatively smooth with faint incised spiral lines

Not uncommon in gravel and under rocks, *O. gracillima* can be found from Monterey California to Northern Baja California, Mexico.

*Ocenebra obesa* and *Ocenebra stearnsi* are synonyms.



***O. gracillima* (Stearns, 1871)**  
 Cabrillo breakwater, San Pedro, California  
 13.86 mm



***Ocinebrina interfossa* (Carpenter, 1864)**  
 Specimen on the left is from Red Rock Beach, Sonoma co., CA (14.49 mm in height)  
 Specimen on the right is 14.51 mm in height and was collected in Cayucos, San Luis Obispo Co., California by E. P. Chace

***Ocinebrina interfossa* (Carpenter, 1864)**

This small species is fairly common in the Southern Californian waters and is readily found crabbed at low tide. Strong axial and spiral sculpture characterize this 12 to 20 mm shell. Most of the specimens that I have seen are a dirty grey to brown in color.

Found from Alaska to Baja California, this species ranges from littoral depth to much deeper waters.

***Ocinebrina atropurpurea* (Carpenter, 1864)**

A very small species, 10 to 14 mm in size, *O. atropurpurea* is dark brown in color, sometimes with a yellow or orange peripheral band. Often confused with *O. interfossa*, Smith and Carlton (1975) distinguish between the two by noting that *atropurpurea* has spiral ribs of nearly the same size and *interfossa* has alternating large and small spiral ribs. While the specimen pictured right is somewhat worn, it is a good representative of the specimens one may encounter on our local beaches.

*Ocenebra clathrata* is a synonym.



***Ocinebrina atropurpurea* (Carpenter, 1864)**  
 Royal Palms Beach, Palos Verdes, California  
 11.22 mm

California's *Ocenebrinas* (Continued from page 3)

### *Ocenebrina foveolata* (Hinds, 1844)

This *Ocenebrina* is amongst the largest (25 to 38 mm in height) and the most variable of the Northeastern Pacific *Ocenebrinae*. The specimens pictured right give some sense of the range of morphology— from smooth shouldered forms to those with axial ribs that are strongly angular at the periphery. Spiral sculpture is always regular and somewhat subdued.

*O. foveolata* also comes in a range of color forms. Both lighter and darker spiral bands can be seen in populations of this species. The author has encountered shells that are bright orange and others that are black in a single population. White shells (see photo below) are also sometimes encountered.

This species is found south of Monterey Bay to Central Baja in intertidal depths.



#### ***Ocenebrina foveolata* (Hinds, 1844)**

Canbys Reef, Santa Barbara Co., California  
Collected and photographed by Paul Kanner



An angular form of *Ocenebrina foveolata* (left) from Canbys Reef, Santa Barbara Co. (29 mm in height) and a white color form (right) that is 27.4 mm in height.



Orange color form of *O. foveolata* from Cayucos, San Luis Obispo Co., California  
20.38 mm



**Ocinebrina beta (Dall, 1919)**  
 Canbys Reef, Santa Barbara Co.  
 18 mm

***Ocinebrina beta* (Dall, 1919)**

Found from Monterey to San Diego Co. at sublittoral depths (and deeper), this attractive species has strong spiral cording and sharp varices that produce blunt spines at the shoulder. The somewhat tabulate profile is accentuated by the reduction in spiral cording above the shoulder.

*O. beta* shells are tan to dark brown in color (sometimes with white banding) and range in size from 15 to 21 mm.



**Ocinebrina lurida (Middendorff, 1848)**  
 Crescent City, Del Norte Co, California  
 Collected by E. P. Chace in 1933  
 16.42 mm

***Ocinebrina lurida* (Middendorff, 1848)**

A species that is more common north of Point Conception, *O. lurida* can be found from Sitka, Alaska to northern Baja California. It is characterized by a somewhat slender, rounded profile and uniform spiral ribbing. There are low axial ribs that are overridden by the spiral sculpture. Color ranges from dark yellow to brown.

Height from 13 to 28 mm

For References, please turn to page 7

**Minus low tides** provide great conditions for observing mollusks and other marine life on Southern California shores. Listed below are some minus low tides that occur during daylight

Please be sure that you are familiar with the California Dept. of Fish and Game regulations regarding the collecting of live mollusks— for details see *Las Conchas*, vol 33, no. 3)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Hgt.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Hgt.</u>
Friday, December 1	12:47 pm	-0.1	Monday, December 18	2:26 pm	-0.5
Saturday, December 2	1:34 pm	-0.8	Tuesday, December 19	3:02 pm	-0.8
Sunday, December 3	2:19 pm	-1.3	Wednesday, December 20	3:39 pm	-1.0
Monday, December 4	3:05 pm	-1.5	Thursday, December 21	4:17 pm	-1.0
Tuesday, December 5	3:50 pm	-1.4	Friday, December 22	4:58 pm	-1.0
Wednesday, December 6	4:36 pm	-1.2	Saturday, December 23	5:40 pm	-0.8
Thursday, December 7	5:23 pm	-0.9	Saturday, December 30	12:48 pm	-0.5
Sunday, December 17	1:52 pm	-0.2	Sunday, December 31	1:37 pm	-1.0

Announcing the eleventh annual meeting  
of the

**Southern California Unified Malacologists (SCUM)**

**January 20, 2007**

**9:00 A.M.**

**San Diego Natural History Museum**

**1788 El Prado**

**Balboa Park, San Diego**

SCUM is an informal association of Southern California professional, amateur and student malacologists and paleontologists who are active or interested in molluscan research. The purpose of the annual gatherings is to facilitate contact and to keep one another informed of research, current activities and opportunities. There are no dues, no officers and no publications. Participants are encouraged to make brief presentations on their current research, work or area of malacological interest.

Contact Scott Rugh (619.255.0230; [srugh@sdnhm.org](mailto:srugh@sdnhm.org)) to RSVP or if you are interested in doing a presentation.

Equipment is available for PowerPoint presentations

The Paleontology collections of the San Diego Natural History Museum will be open to SCUM members after the meeting. This invertebrate fossil collection houses 39,540 specimen records with over a million specimens.

**REGARDING FUTURE PARKING AT THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM...** beginning for everyone in late November the east parking lot will be closed to all parking as it will be a staging area for earthquake retrofitting construction equipment for the 1913 portion of the building. Therefore, all members will be required to park in the west lot off of Menlo Street and perhaps in the 5-star lot across Menlo (those who arrive late will be subjected to the parking fee unless I can successfully negotiate a waiver for PCC members). The construction is scheduled to last at least a year and perhaps longer ... we'll just have to wait and see how the construction goes. This will directly effect our January through May meetings and October through November meetings (7 meetings total). Carpooling will definitely be a good idea for this time period.

*California Ocinebrinas* (Continued from page 5)**References**

- R. Tucker Abbott, American Seashells, Second Edition, 1974, Van Nostrand Reinhold
- James McLean & Terrence Gosliner, Taxonomic Atlas of the Benthic Fauna of the Santa Maria Basin and the Western Santa Barbara Channel, Vol. 9, 1996, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History
- James McLean, Marine Shells of Southern California, March 20, 1978, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, Science Series 24 Revised Edition
- Ralph Smith & James Carlton, Light's Manual: Intertidal Invertebrates of the Central California Coast, 1975, University of California Press
- Donna Turgeon et al, Common and Scientific Names of Aquatic Invertebrates from the United States and Canada: MOLLUSKS, Second Edition, 1998, American Fisheries Society Special Publication 26

### Tips From Conch-L : Cleaning Cones

*Conch-L is the listserv of the Conchologists of America and functions as a lively community of amateurs and professionals interested in shell collecting and malacology. The question posed below and ensuing responses come from a recent thread on Conch-L.*

**Q:** "...regarding *Conus*....or any other mollusk with a thin and narrow aperture....is there an easy way to clean them?" ... I have noticed in the *Conus* they retreat deep inside the first coil of the shell, making it very difficult to retrieve them with a pick without damaging the lip edge."

**A:** That's a good question, and one that most people have pondered, if they've cleaned very many cone shells. After chipping the lips on a few hundred, having some turn to jerky, some rot and smell REALLY bad, and some cooked in the microwave until they smelled worse than the Pago Pago tuna cannery on a bad day, I finally figured out a trick that might benefit you. It doesn't make much difference if you freeze and thaw, boil a few minutes, or just let the cone animal rot for a couple of days. The trick is not to try to get the animal out with a pick, but instead to insert a straight rod or stiff wire into the shell from the anterior tip, aimed at the spire of the shell. For most shells, I use the spring-steel slide rod from my plastic calipers. For small ones, I use a straight, stiff pin or needle. (A needle is stiffer, so it usually works best, even if you often need to insert the dull end rather than the pointed end.) A straightened paper clip will work fairly well also, although many of them aren't stiff enough to suit me. Then, all you have to do is apply pressure on the dead animal, forcing it toward the opening. It will come out in a sheet, leaving you to only have to shake or wash the liver out of the spire of the shell. The operculum, if the cone had one, is almost always still attached to the animal, so it is much easier to retrieve than if you use the water-blast method



***Conus bandanus* Hwass in Bruguière, 1792**  
Black Rock, Kaanapali, Maui, Hawaii  
in sand pocket on rocky shelf at 18 feet  
Leg, Phil Liff-Grieff 12/26/01

as a first resort. If you keep the rod, wire, or needle straight, and don't bend it against the tip of the shell, your worries with chipped lips are over!

*Don Barclay*

**December Meeting: SUNDAY, December 10, 2006**

**1:00 pm — 4:00 pm (please note the earlier start time)**

**PROGRAM: Holiday Party**

**LOCATION: Home of David and Barbara Bridgnell**

**26963 Bolan Lane, Palos Verdes**

**Bridgnell's Phone: (310) 377-9710**

**DIRECTIONS:**

From the San Diego Freeway in the South Bay, exit on Crenshaw Boulevard and head south about 7 miles, past Pacific Coast Highway, up the hill to Palos Verdes Drive North. Make a left turn onto Palos Verdes Drive North and make an immediate right turn onto Eastvale. Proceed up the hill on Eastvale to Bolan Lane on your right. Turn onto Bolan; The Bridgnell home is at the end of the cul de sac.

Bring a wrapped shell related gift of approximately \$10-\$15 in value for the annual gift "exchange". If you bring a shell, be sure that it is fully labeled. (The ensuing gift exchange activity is a lot of fun but, be warned, it can get ugly!!)

**Refreshments are potluck (the club will provide chicken).**

**RSVP to Janice Abdulian at (818) 981-8533 or [jab56@earthlink.net](mailto:jab56@earthlink.net)**

Articles of interest to shell collectors are solicited for publication in this newsletter. Contents may be reprinted with credit being given to the Pacific Conchological Club, Inc.



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**DATED MATERIAL**