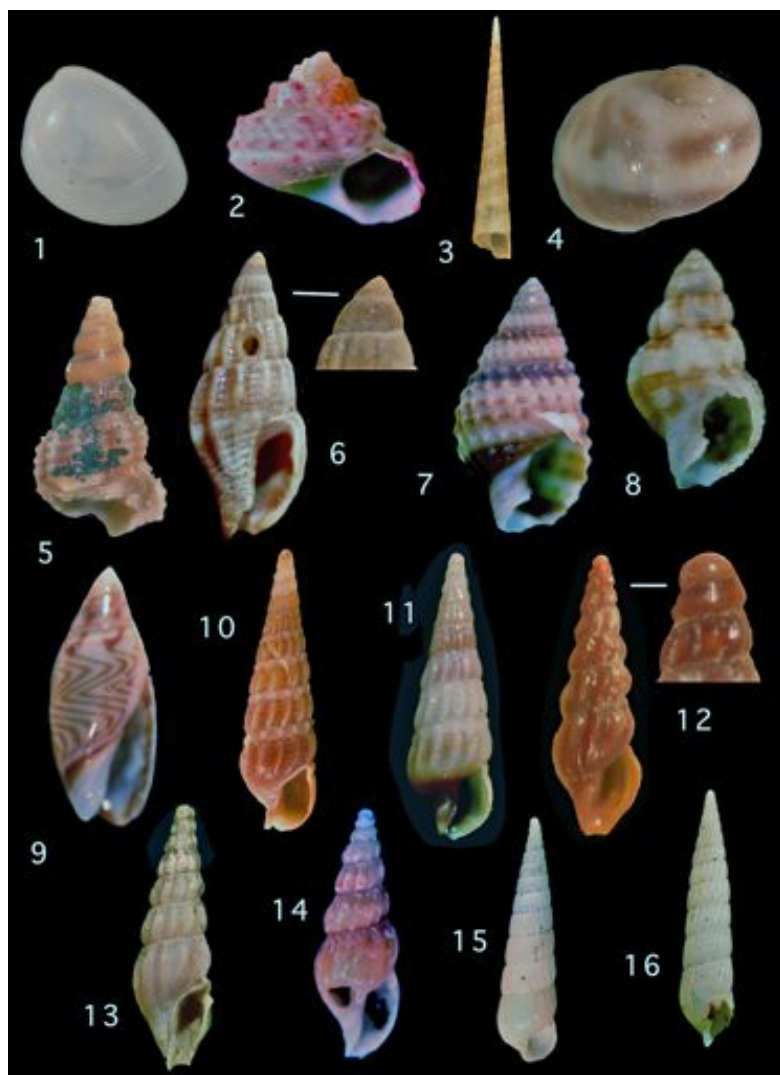


A PARTING GIFT by E. Shary Almasi

As many of the PNWSC members know, I recently fell heir to Trevor Roberts shell collection. While clearing the top of one of his shell cabinets I picked up a very small plastic box with several micro shells in it. Inside he had included a note stating that the shells were taken from the stomach of a sea star in Panama. Well, I took the box home, sat it on my desk and thought little about it. However, at least twice I picked it up intending to give it the 'deep-six' but something made me hang on to it. Curiosity, perhaps?

A few weeks ago, I decided to do something with it and asked our dear friend, Dr. Emilio Garcia of Lafayette, Louisiana if he would be so kind as to identify the shells for me. He said 'gladly'. Before shipping them off, I decided to look into my diaries from the Panama trips and see if they had been mentioned. Happily, I lucked out as I started with the very last time we had gone to Panama together to visit James Ernest, our intrepid Panamanian shell dealer and host and I immediately found what I was looking for. On 1 February 1996, while we were dredging at Punta Arenas I had made note of the fact that James right-hand man, Rafael Castillo, had pulled a sea star out of the dredgings that we had just pulled at 80 feet and, with a knife, had opened that sea star. In the stomach he found 17 shells which he handed to Trevor. Thus I had 'data'. I also learned from Emilio that a sea star can extend its stomach outside the body and take in the shells, consume the yummy parts and dump what is left. Another lesson learned.

So, off the shells went to Emilio. Soon he happily informed me that he could identify 11 of the 16 species. Sizes ranged from 3 mm to 13 mm. He took the trouble to photograph each shell and sent me a 'plate' of all 16 species. It is beautiful. The stomach contents are:



1. *Nucula exigua* Sowerby, 1833 - 3.5 mm
2. *Solariella triplostephanus* Dall, 1910 - 4 mm
3. *Turritella* cf. *mariana* Dall, 1908 - 13.0 mm
4. *Natica othello* Dall, 1908 - 3 mm
5. *Phos* sp. ? - 4.5 mm
6. *Parvanachis guerreroensis* Strong & Hertlein, 1937 - 4.5 mm
7. *Nassarius gemmulosus* (C. B. Adams, 1852) - 6.5 mm
8. *Nassarius* sp. - 5.0 mm
9. *Olivella morrisoni* Olsson, 1956 - 5.5 mm
10. *Terebra armillata* Hinds, 1844 - 7 mm
11. *Terebra guayaquilensis* (E. A. Smith, 1880) - 7 mm
12. *Leptadrillia* cf. *firmichorda* McLean & Poorman, 1971 - 7 mm
13. *Leptadrillia elissa* (Dall, 1919) - 7 mm
14. *Kurtziella?* sp. - 7 mm
15. *Turbonilla (Strioturbonilla)* sp. - 8 mm
16. *Turbonilla (Chemnitzia)* sp. - 6.0 mm

As some of the shells were immature, or damaged, he was able to identify only eleven of them. He delighted me when he said that the 'good news' was that I had some very interesting material, including the two *Leptadrillia* and the *Solariella*. Then he said that he found it most interesting to find the *Parvanachis guerreroensis* at the Panama locale because as far as he knew it had not been reported south of Mexico! So we perhaps had a range extension! Or we had a well-traveled sea star who had lost its way!! Emilio told me that I should write an article on this range extension, however, I felt that he would be much better at this article than would I! So, he has written a very nice article and it is being reviewed by *The Festivus*, a publication of the San Diego Shell Club.

Trevor Roberts was a very special person to so many of us in the Pacific Northwest Shell Club. At the 'Celebration of his Life' we all contributed stories of this generous and life-loving man. I feel that this little box of shells is one more gift that Trevor is sending our way. Emilio says that Trevor is laughing at all this and he is definitely wearing something very red!