



The Epitonium

Flower Gardens Program

NOAA Update On Recent Flower Garden Banks East Bank Mass Mortality

By Rusti Stover

Reported to us in early August via email from Les Crnkovic and Lucy Clampit was an article about a severe mass mortality event in the Flower Gardens Banks National Marine Sanctuary East Bank coral reef. This shocking event is of great concern to the club, and we decided to follow up by contacting NOAA (The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. NOAA is the agency of the United States federal government responsible for monitoring our climate and environment, and taking steps to preserve them).

We made contact with Shelley Dupuy, NOAA outreach coordinator from the Galveston office, who agreed to come and talk to us about what is happening out there. She will be our September speaker, to open our new meetings season, on **Tuesday, September 20, 2016, at 7:00 PM at the Houston Museum of Natural**

Science. The program will start at 7:30 PM, and our business meeting will follow.

In an interesting side note, in the back-and-forth emails between me and Ms. Dupuy, we chatted about our club and she mentioned this: "On a side note, when I first started working with the sanctuary back in 1994, we had quite a bit of interaction with the Houston Museum of Natural Science and the Houston Conchology Society. Connie Boone was a significant player in getting the sanctuary designated and was our contact at the museum for events such as the first couple of sanctuary anniversaries. I believe she was a member of the Society and may have been an employee of the museum"... very interesting, indeed!

We hope to see you in attendance at this season kick-off meeting, and perhaps during our social time, we can all chat about our summer shelly adventures!

President's Message

Welcome Back!

We were pleased that so many of you could join us for the August Social at Katz.

This year HCS already has great programs lined up you won't want to miss! So see you at the meeting!

Leslie



President:
Leslie Crnkovic
713-598-7084

Vice President:
Rusti Stover
713-614-4882

Treasurer:
Sandy Clark
713-926-6797

Recording Secretary:
Tina Petway
713-864-6683

Corresponding Secretary:
Jerry Clampit
713-468-0610

Visit HCS online at
www.houstonshellclub.com

CALENDAR

9-20	HCS meeting
10-15	Sea-Bean Symposium
10-18	HCS meeting
11-13	Gem & Mineral Show
11-15	HCS meeting

Membership Renewals

If you have not paid dues for 2016-17, and you receive the newsletter via snail mail you will find a renewal form enclosed in this issue. If you read it on the Internet and have not renewed, you will receive a form in an email.

There are no minutes for this issue.

May Banquet

On May 21 several HCS members gathered at Brady's Landing for lunch and recognition of outgoing and incoming officers.
(Photos by Rusti Stover)



Gems of the Sea

On August 19 the Houston Museum of Natural Science opened a new exhibit titled “Gems of the Sea: The Guido T. Poppe Collection.” The museum recently purchased over 25,000 fully documented specimen shells from Mr. Poppe’s Philippine collection. It is the most complete assemblage of marine mollusks from a single Indo-Pacific region, and they are pictured in his books about Philippine shells. Many of the shells are rare and unusual specimens.

Tina Petway helped put together this dazzling display of a few of the shells and gave an interesting lecture about the shells before she led a tour through the exhibit. It is housed in the museum’s “Gem Vault” and is free with admission to the museum. The exhibit will be open for several months but don’t delay in going to see these gorgeous “gems.” (Photos by Rachel Zelko)



Upcoming Events

Sea-Bean Symposium www.seabean.com

Oct. 14-15 | Galveston, Texas

FREE! No ticket or reservation required!

HGMS Gem, Jewelry, Mineral, and Fossil Show Nov. 11-13 | Humble Civic Center - \$8

www.hgms.org/Show.html

Is it fish or fowl?

By Joaquin Inchaustegui

I was not able to read Vol. 44, No.1, March 2016 issue of *The American Conchologist* magazine because of the injections in my eyes to alleviate my Macular Degeneration, but, eventually, I was able to read it.

While reading “The Ohio State University Fresh Water Mussel Collection,” I saw on Pg. 28, Fig.7, what I hope the authors meant to be a jest or a prank when they said... ”Note the rare fresh water mussel that imitates a fish.” This is neither rare nor is it a mussel. The Japanese fisherman, or some other Japanese artisan, uses a pearly mussel and carves on the inside part of the shell a very vivid replica of a little fish to sell to gullible tourists.

When I was exchanging specimen shells with a friend in Japan, long before Hurricane Katrina destroyed my home on the beach front on the Mississippi coast, along with my entire shell collection, my friend sent me some pearly mussels along with a little fish carved from one of the valves. The other side of the valve with the carved fish had what appeared to be something like periostracum. It must now be swimming in the Gulf of Mexico.

There are many other “concerns” with the little fish:

- 1) Where does the intelligent mussel get the paint to color the yellow and black eye of the fish?
- 2) Why would the mussel create a little fish that would attract predators to the mussel?
- 3) Have you seen a half grown mussel and does it have a half grown fish on its shell?
- 4) Why (since the fish is on the inside of one of the valves, out of sight) would the mussel spend so much energy on such a useless endeavor?
- 5) Why when the live, closed mussel shell would not allow the fish to show until years later, and the mussel dies and then VOILA! There appears a beautiful little fish of no use to its creator but designed to confuse learned Conchologists and University Professors?
- 6) My final “concern” is that when the mussel is on the bottom of a fresh water river or creek, and a little fish passes by, the mussel says to itself, “That is a good little fish for me to mimic”, but it better not be a red one, or a black one, or a striped one because, unless the fish is a pearly white one, the mussel would be at a loss. Then after a few seconds the fish has passed out of sight and the mussel has decided to mimic it, (Do mussels have eyes? Where does it store the image of the fish? Is the mussel’s brain developed enough to store the image long enough so it can create the fish? Do they even have a brain at all?)

I am surprised a name for this “rare” mussel has not been created, such as *Ichthyolosaurus spatiooca!*

My Mama, who was a high school teacher back in the Dominican Republic, told me a long time ago, “Joaquin, remember always that all that glitters is not gold,” and in this case “all pearly fish are not mussel created.”

But what do I know about bivalves!

COA 2016

By Lucy Clampit

Jerry and I arrived in Chicago during a thunderstorm with fireworks provided by Mother Nature. It was a precursor of events to come. Two nights we were treated to fireworks shows outside our hotel window, and the night of the welcome party we watched fireworks over Lake Michigan from the back steps of the Field Museum. None of it was arranged by COA.

Conventioneers had several interesting field trip choices that included museums, the Shedd Aquarium, an Architectural Boat Tour, and a dinner cruise on Lake Michigan. Since the Field Museum does not have a display of shells, I took the behind the scenes tour of the Malacology Department at the museum. Their curators do lots of research, so it was very interesting.

Some of those curators were among the speakers at the convention. Rudiger Bieler presented an outstanding program about his work with re-growing corals in areas where they are dying in the Florida Keys. There were many other interesting speakers including Texas' own Bruce Neville, and former HCS member Doug Stemke who presented a travelogue of his trip through Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji. Doug spent some of his youth in Houston.

Over a dozen Texans enjoyed shell shopping at the convention and seeing the sights of Chicago. Some of us treated ourselves to the famous Chicago stuffed pizza. Yum!

Mark your calendar now for the **2017 convention – August 19-19 in Key West, FL.**



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Permission is granted for reprinting articles, provided credit is given to *The Epitonium*, the writer, and the Houston Conchology Society and a copy of the reprint is sent to the editor of the newsletter.

Editor: Lucy Clampit
10532 Hammerly Blvd., Houston, TX 77043
Phone: (713) 468-0610
E-mail: lclampit@comcast.net

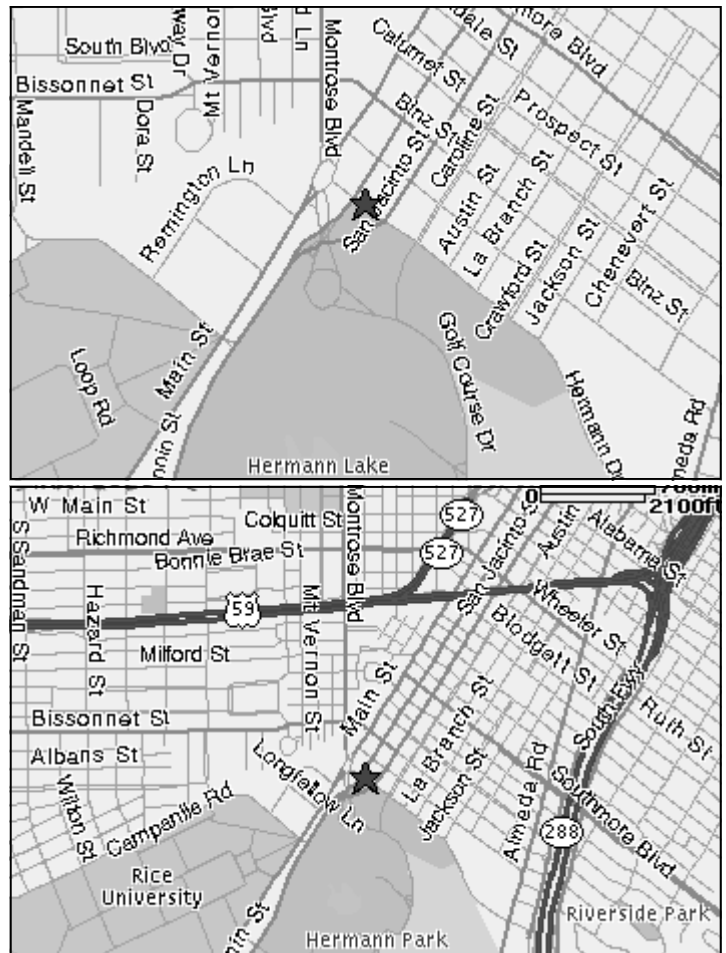
The Society holds regular meetings on the third Tuesday of August, September, October, November, January, February and April. There are seasonal events and a yearly shell auction scheduled in the other months. Meetings start at 7:30 PM at the Museum of Natural Science, 5555 Hermann Park Drive.

VISITORS WELCOME!!!

Membership year extends from June 1 through May 31.
Annual membership dues: Family \$12; Single \$10; Junior (under 18) \$6; Subscriptions only (Museums, Corporations) \$12; Foreign postage add \$8.

Make checks payable to Houston Conchology Society and send to Sandy Clark, 2475 Underwood St. #288, Houston, TX 77005.

5555 Hermann Park Drive, Houston, TX



HOUSTON CONCHOLOGY SOCIETY

Jerry Clampit, Corresponding Secretary
10532 Hammerly Blvd.
Houston, Texas 77043