

Conus marmoreus Linne

THE MALACOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALASIA Inc. VICTORIAN BRANCH BULLETIN

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VIC. BR. BULL. NO. 276

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2014

NOTICE OF MEETING

The next meeting of the Branch will be held on the 20th of October at the Melbourne Camera Club Building, cnr. Dorcas & Ferrars Sts South Melbourne at 8pm.

Our speaker for the evening will be Simon Wilson who will give a presentation on – “**Diving Adventures on South Australia’s Lower Eyre Peninsula**”.

The November meeting will be on the 17th. This will be our Annual General Meeting for the election of office bearers followed by a Member’s Night.

Supper and Raffles as usual.

2015 New Zealand Shell Show reminder.

I am delighted to tell you and your Club members that the Wellington Shell Club will be hosting the next New Zealand Shell Show at the Petone Club in Udy Street, Petone, Lower Hutt from Friday 16 to Sunday 18 January 2015.

We hope that some of your members will be able to attend our Show next year and support us with exhibits. We will have more detailed information about the Show available soon and will keep you updated.

Meantime we hope you will include notification of the Show in your newsletters and website.

Thanks and regards,
Pat Lakeman

Secretary / Treasurer Michael Lyons Tel. No. 9894 1526

**BELATURRICULA FROM SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIAN WATERS
(FAMILY BORSONIIDAE –FORMERLY TURRIDAE)**

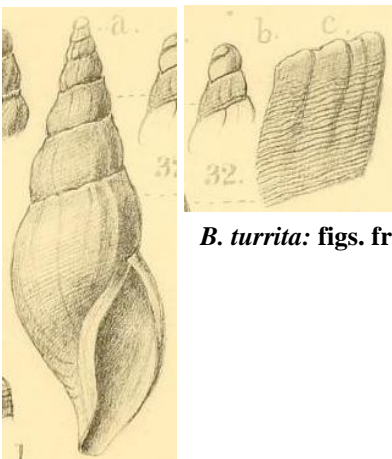
The genus *Belaturricula* Powell, 1951, was erected for a single species, *Belaturrita* Strebel, 1908, from off South Georgia in 160m. The shell of *B. turrita* is described thus (paraphrased from a translation of the original German):

Belaturrita Strebel, Gast.Schwed.Sudpolar-Exped. Vol. 6, 1908: 18, Pl. 3, figs. 32a-c

Shell thin, narrowly fusiform, spire length greater than the body whorl. The protoconch is bluntly rounded (*and paucispiral according to Powell, 1969*). Whorls 7½, separated by a somewhat irregular suture. The whorls are initially angled then slightly bulging before being impressed at the sutures. Aperture shape as shown in the sketch. The base of the columella is slightly twisted and thickened. Longitudinal growth lines run from the suture slightly forward then angled and bent to form the shape of the sinus. Apart from the growth lines, there are clearly marked creases, particularly below the suture, weaker and wider and irregular towards the base of the whorls. Spiral sculpture is of clearly defined, fine striations of irregular breadth, finer close to the sutures but broader towards the base; on the middle part of the body whorl they are separated by distinct gaps; on the penultimate whorl I can count 35 such striations. The outer lip is thin, and broken on the type, but the figure depicts it whole. The animal is retracted far into the shell so that the operculum is obscured. **Colour** milky white, the columella pure white. **Measurements** 60mm x 21mm – 27.8 x 9.1. Strebel also noted that “the position of this species within the genus is unconfirmed. It reminds me of *S. dissimilis* but it doesn’t appear to me to quite fit *Sircula*.”



B. turrita from off South Georgia
(Photo from Powell, 1969)



B. turrita: figs. from original description

S. dissimilis: fig. from the original description



Powell applied the same genus *Belaturricula* to the following species which is remarkably similar. He noted that the placing in this genus was tentative only because the unique holotype of *B. dissimilis* is a dead shell, minus the protoconch. As can be seen below, Watson was quite definite about the shape of the sinus, and yet the outer lip is broken and the form of the sinus can only be adduced from the shape of the growth lines.

Pleurotoma (Sircula) dissimilis Watson, Challenger Zool. 15, 1886: 298, Pl. 26, fig. 3

Shell long, fusiform, with 7 rounded whorls, glossy. Sculpture of fine, hairlike lines of growth, a few slightly stronger than the rest. Spirals: There are many feeble, narrow, irregular threadlets, parted by almost obsolete furrows; they are a little stronger on the base, and weaker on the sinus region below the suture; on the back of the snout are 2 or 3 a little stronger than the rest. There is a faint approach to a carination in the middle of each whorl. Aperture long and narrow, oblique, outer lip thin; sinus broad, open and deep, lying quite up to the suture; inner lip with a thin glaze spreading narrowly on the body; canal short and open. **Colour** yellowish ivory white. **Length** of holotype 68mm, width 24mm. **Type locality** 500 fathoms, south-east of the Philippines: 4°33’N, 127°06E.

[There was another record of this species from off South Africa by Barnard in 1958. However, Barnard subsequently (1963) noted that his was something different. He named it *Typhlosyrinx pyrropelex* Barnard, 1963, and so the South African record has now been disregarded. The Philippines record is the only one now recognized.] **Photo of holotype of *P (S) dissimilis* in British Museum of Natural History.**



We have in the Museum of Victoria several specimens from deep water off the coast of southern NSW, eastern Victoria, and eastern Tasmania. These appear to be very close to one or other of the above two species. I picture them below and make the following comments:

The first specimen, a single shell from off Nowra, NSW, differs from *turrita* and *dissimilis* by being distinctly more rounded, with a somewhat more open anterior canal, and with more pronounced shoulders that carry a number of strong plications.



Belaturricula sp. from 1700m, off Nowra, NSW.
Mus. Vic. collection, July 1986.



Belaturricula sp. from 1000m, off Point Hicks,
Vic. Mus. Vic. Collection July 1986

Photos of S.E. Australian specimens by PlatonVafiadis.

The second lot of specimens fit the description of *B. dissimilis* closely. There are a number from 1000m depth, off Point Hicks, from 80km ENE of Nowra, and a single specimen from 1000m depth off the west coast of Tasmania. The largest of these specimens is 83mm long. I have now had a chance to examine these shells and note the following variations:

The sutures in the shells are slightly more excavated. The concentric incised lines are fairly obsolete, especially on the upper whorls; generally they are slightly more definite below the periphery of the body whorl. The protoconchs are well-preserved. The apex is smooth and the next four whorls carry oblique axial ribs, 14 per whorl, with a distinct kink in the middle. The next whorl is rounded rather than kinked and there is no ribbing at all on subsequent whorls. The dark brown operculum is about 12mm long, with concentric spirals about a nucleus that is towards one end.

When it comes to deep-sea shells, it is very hard to obtain enough detail to be able to state definite ranges. The underwater world is very cold, whether in the tropics or higher latitudes, and the currents are quite different to those at the surface. It is quite possible that shells that live at depth in tropical seas might have a very wide distribution. My initial thoughts were that the Point Hicks shells were, in fact, *B. dissimilis*. However, after closer examination I think that we have definitely one new species, and probably two. I would like to see if there are any other specimens in other museums before making a definite statement about the number of species in South-Eastern Australia.

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Strebel, H. (1908) Wissenschaftliche Ergebnisse der Schwedischen Sudpolar-Expedition 1901-1903

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Alan Monger

***Trinchesia sororum* Burn, 1964: a golden anniversary.**

Tis 50 years since the aeolid nudibranch *Trinchesia sororum* was described by myself in one of the early issues of the *Journal of the Malacological Society of Australia* (1964, vol. 1 (8): 17-18. Fig. 11-15). It is a pretty little species, up to 7mm long, with white body, pale mauve bands on the oral tentacles and rhinophores, and blocky brick-red digestive gland in each of the cerata which cover most of the dorsal surface. The species name *sorum* is a combination of the latin *soror* = sister and – *arum* – feminine possessive termination, in this case honouring sisters Fay and Margery Murray, stalwart members of the Victorian Branch.

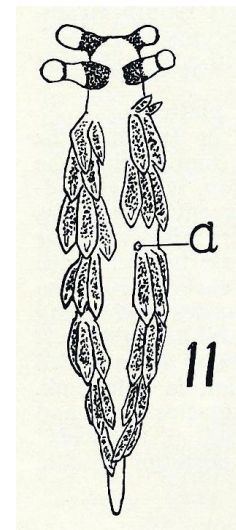
The holotype specimen of *Trinchesia sororum* was collected at Point Lonsdale on 22 September 1963. Seventeen years elapsed before another specimen was sighted, this time at Point Danger in 1981 and 1982. Then, after a gap of 26 years, another Point Lonsdale specimen was discovered on 7 June 2008. In, all seven single/specimens from seven collecting events, suggesting a very uncommon species with very limited distribution. For those that don't know, Point Lonsdale and Point Danger are less than 20 km apart and have long proved to be my favourite collecting locations.

The distribution of *Trinchesia sororum* can now be extended greatly to the west. Three live specimens have been photographed and examined that were collected from brown algae samples, taken at 10m depth from HMAS Hobart sunken ship/artificial reef, off Wirrina, Gulf St Vincent, South Australia on 6 August 2014 by the SACRED dive group. This number of specimens would suggest that *Trinchesia sororum* is perhaps a more western "Flindersian" species that at times reaches eastward into the Bass Strait area.

Robert Burn



Specimen of *Trinchesia sororum* off Wirrina, Gulf St Vincent,
Photo taken and supplied by Leon Altoff



Original figure from 1964
Journal of the Malacological Society of Australia 1(8):19 - figure 11

August meeting notes

Simon Wilson showed underwater footage of the terrain in ~30 metres of water off Esperence, Western Australia showing large outcrops of rock with prolific invertebrate life.

Simon also showed images of a live collected *Mitra solida* (the first live specimen from this location?) from Sydney Harbour showing detail of the animal and a live *Pterynotus duffusi* from Botany Bay, NSW. He also

showed images of some *Umbilia hesitata* collected by a diver in Tasmania and photographs of a very distinctive cowry collected from the East and South coasts of Tasmania which he believes to be *Notocypraea subcarnea*.

Simon also tabled correspondence from Felix Lorenz discussing the *Notocypraea* for his upcoming book on cowries in which he acknowledges the work of Don Cram on this difficult Genus.

Don Cram discussed an email he had received from Felix Lorenz with preliminary text on the genus *Notocypraea* from his upcoming book on cowries and that he was writing his comments and opinions on what Felix was proposing.

Geoff Macaulay showed recent additions to his collection during recent dives at Portsea and Stony Point, including *Tenagodus australis* from Portsea, and *Notocypraea piperita* (31mm), *Ataxocerithium serotinum*, *Austrodrillia beraudiana* and *Prototyphis angasi* from Stony Point.

Geoff also showed a large *Marginella gigas* and a *Turbo chinensis* from Taiwan; *Conus thailandis* and Sepia 'bones' from Thai fishermen; land and freshwater snail shells from Guatemala; *Erato volutella* from Haiti and a ~60mm specimen of *Socotora albicans albicans* from the island of Socotra off Yemen.

Platon Vafiadis showed slides of micro molluscs collected from weed in the intertidal zone at Shoreham by Leon Altoff and Audrey Falconer. Species pictured included: *Amphithalamus* sp, *Eatoniella* cf *depressa*, *Eatoniella fulva*, *Eatoniella galbinia*, *Eatoniella melanochroma*, *Eatoniella puniceolina*, *Tricolia rosea*, *Zelipaisin scripta*, Some unidentified trochids.

Platon also showed images of nudibranchs collected from Rapid Bay, South Australia *Crosslandia viridus*, *Eubranchus* sp and two unnamed *Hancockia*.

From a recent trip to Waratah bay Platon had images of the introduced snails *Theba pisana* and *Cochlicella ventrosa* from coastal plants. From the beach the following species were pictured: *Placamen placida*, *Dosinia caerulea*, *Eucrassatella kingicola*, *Pecten fumatus* and *Myochama anomioides* and a dead boarfish.

Michael Lyons showed recent finds including *Notochlamys hexactes*, *Acrosterigma cygnorum*, *Dosinia victoriae*, *Phasianella australis*, *Vexillum australe* from Portsea and *Sassia subdistorta* from Stony Point.

September meeting notes

Simon Wilson - Simon reported on an email from Felix Lorenz who had recently been diving in the Gulf of Suez. Dives were conducted to depths of 85 metres. A new species of *Conus* and a Muricid were collected as well as specimens of *Cypraea camelopardalis* to 85mm. Felix had also reported a mass die off of *Spondylus* that were attached to a shipwreck.

Simon also showed a large specimen of *Turbo gruneri* from off Portsea, noting that this species is being found quite regularly over the last year. Previously they had been very rare. Simon also showed a *Semipallium aktinos* collected dead from Portsea and *Notocypraea comptonii* collected from Diamond Bay.

Chris Bunyard – The article on Fascioliariidae by Robert Burn in issue 275 of The Victorian Branch Bulletin prompted Chris to bring in specimens belonging to the new genus *Australaria*. *Australaria australasia* from Port Welshpool, *A. bakeri* from off Portland, and *A. tenuitesta* trawled from 100-120 fathoms off Swains Reef, QLD.

Don Cram – Don gave a presentation on notes of the taxonomic history of *Notocypraea mayi*.

Geoff Macaulay – Geoff brought in recent additions to his library including a book on the land snails of Portugal; Ashley Miskelly's "Sea urchins of the world: diversity, symmetry & design" and recent issues of "Basteria", from Netherlands Malacological Society and "Archiv Für Molluskenkunde" which contain papers on land snails.

Geoff also brought in shells collected from recent dives including an orange coloured *Notochlamys hexactes* valve, *Cumia mestayerae* and *Calliostoma allporti* from Cottage by the Sea, Queenscliff, *Spondylus tenellus* from Portsea, *Agnewia tritoniformis*, *Notocypraea comptonii* and *Vexillum australe* from Diamond Bay, Sorrento. Geoff had also received a delivery of land snails from Columbia.

Michael Lyons

Further notes on the taxonomic history of *Notocypraea*.

For many years now there has been much debate over the validity of some names introduced after 1870 and the taxonomic history of specimens described prior to this date has been recently published (Cram, 2013). In 1896 and 1897, Lt. C.E. Beddome, Tasmanian Naval officer and conchologist introduced three new species, *Cypraea subcarnea* 1896, *Cypraea albata* and *Cypraea mayi*, 1897, as varieties of *Cypraea angustata*.

After Beddome died in 1898, his collection was sent to his brother R.H. Beddome in England for sale by Fulton and Sowerby (3rd), prominent shell dealers at the time. The British Museum (now NHMUK), purchased *Cyp albata*, (described from a single specimen) from Fulton and Sowerby, which is recorded on the type specimen label. *Cypraea subcarnea* is a name adopted by Beddome from C.F. Ancey who gave it a manuscript name from specimens sent to him by Beddome some months earlier.

When C.F. Ancey died in 1906, his collection was dispersed by dealer Geret, but most types ended up in Museums in Belgium, Paris, Honolulu, and the British Museum. The type specimen of *subcarnea* in the NHMUK carries the label *Cypraea angustata* var: *subcarnea* Ancey. Although R.J. Griffiths stated that both *subcarnea* and *albata* were purchased from Fulton and Sowerby there is no note of this on the accompanying label of *subcarnea*.

It could be that the holotype of *subcarnea* in the British Museum came from specimens sent to Ancey by Beddome and described by him as a new species but never published, making Beddome's note under the rules to be the original description. The specimen of *Cypraea mayi* I photographed in 1980 and illustrated below is in the type collection of the NHMUK, is not one of Beddome's specimens, but from the collection of R.W. Greenish.

Although much controversy still surrounds the taxonomic status of *subcarnea* and *albata* and is subject to ongoing and yet to be completed research, the case for *mayi* is much easier to explain. Originally described as CYP ANGUSTATA, Gray, var MAYI, in "Notes on species of *Cypraea* inhabiting the shores of Tasmania, published in *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales, 1897, Part 3, September 29th*". Beddome described and illustrated *mayi* from four selected specimens: Fig. 4, 24 x 16 x 13 mm: dorsum rich orange colour with two chocolate bands and above the spire some spots that form a third band: Fig. 5, specimen of similar measurements and colour. Fig. 6, 25 x 16 x 12 mm: dorsum dull chocolate colour, three distinct bands. Fig. 7, 21 x 14 x 11mm; specimen with rich orange dorsum. Width to length ratios, Fig. 4 & 5, 66.6%: Fig 6, 64% : Fig 7, 66.6%. Average width to length ratio of *N angustata*, Griffiths 1962 67%.

He published Gray's original description of *C. comptonii*, stating that he had not seen specimens from northern Australia (Port Essington, Grays type locality), but some from South Australia which he had seen being a much darker chocolate colour than Tasmanian specimens. Fig 15 is of a specimen 24x15x11mm with a dull orange brown dorsum. The width to length ratio of this specimen is 62.5% closer to Griffiths 1962 average 61%.

Sir Joseph Verco in his 1908 *Catalogue of Marine Mollusca of South Australia* listed *mayi* along with *comptonii*, *declivis*, *subcarnea*, and *albata* as varieties of *angustata*; *Cyp piperita* as a good species with variety *bicolour*, plus *Cyp pulicaria*.

W.L. May, after whom the species was named did not include it in his 1923 *Illustrated Index of Tasmanian Shells*, listing and illustrating only *angustata* with *albata*, *piperita* and *declivis* being listed as varieties.

Cotton and Godfrey February 1932 *SA Naturalist*, raised *mayi* to specific rank, referring only to the difference in colour (rich orange or dull salmon) from *comptonii*, which he described as rich brown.

Iredale 1935 *Australian Zoologist Vol. 111* (Australian Cowries) described *comptonii*, but due to its published type locality wrote: "The probable elimination of this name is suggested, and the real *comptonii* may be a form of *walkeri*". Did not mention *mayi* or its use as an alternative name.

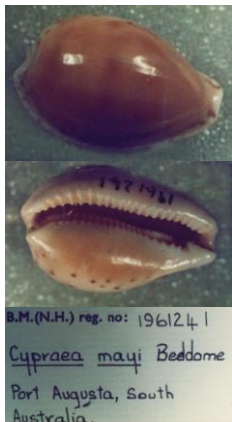
Steadman and Cotton 1946, "Records of the South Australian Museum, A key to the Classification of the Cowries" followed Iredale's suggestion, eliminated *comptonii* and replaced it with *mayi*.

Joyce Allan in her 1956 *Cowry Shells of World Seas* followed Steadman and Cotton and Iredale, listing *comptonii* as a form of *walker* and listing *mayi* as a valid species replacing *comptonii*.

Then what is *mayi* ? *Cypraea angustata mayi* Beddome, 1897 is simply an orange or dull salmon form of *.comptonii*, adopted and promoted by early conchologists who at the time had little to no understanding of what they were looking at. None of these had any interest in the living animal and were strictly conchologists,

When Beddome described *mayi* from Tasmania, he thought it was a banded form of *angustata*, due to its broader length to width ratio than the normal *comptonii*, which seems to occur in washed up specimens from any locality across their range. As the first of four specimens described had a rich orange dorsum, Cotton 1932 raised it to specific rank and applied it to the paler and more orange form of *comptonii* found at Port Mac Donnell and other locations in South Australia .

From then on *comptonii* and *mayi* were determined by collectors by the colour of the dorsum. On 26/10/1969 our first live specimens of *comptonii* were found at Flinders in the same rock pool. Three were the typical dark specimens commonly found there and also in Western Port Bay and the fourth was a pale orange specimen, identical to those found at Port MacDonnell. The dorsum colour of *comptonii* is variable from light to dark and although specimens can be typical of an area, similar forms are often found in geographically distant areas. Although the animal colour varies with the shell, the body, tentacles and siphon of each specimen are always the same colour and published radular studies have proved them to be one distinct species.



Type specimen NHMUK
R.W Greenish collection
Not one of Beddome's.



Centre Top L-R, 1, Stansbury SA, 2, Lulworth Tasmania, 3, Somers Victoria.
All these could be considered to be *N.comptonii* .

Centre Bottom L-R, 4, San Remo Victoria, 5, Bichino Tasmania, 6, Pt. Macdonnell SA.

All these could be considered to be *N.mayi*.

Figure 4 from San Remo is closest to Beddome's figure 4 in size and dorsum colour.

Plate far right ----

Beddome's original illustrations: Fig's 1-3 *Cyp angustata*, 4-7 *Cyp mayi*, 8-10 *Cyp subcarnea*, 11 & 11a *Cyp albata*, 12-14 *Cyp declivis*, 15-16 *Cyp comptonii*, 17-18 *Cyp piperita*, 19 *Trivia australis* .



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Griffiths, R.J. 1962. A review of the Cypraeidae genus *Notocypraea*. *Memoirs of the National Melbourne* 25:211-231.

Additional publications by the author relating to this article can be accessed in Vic. Br. Bull. No's. 260, 265 & 273.

Dive Log 2014 20 N367 U/W 405.11

Cottages By The Sea 13.09.14 Simon Wilson & Michael Lyons

Shore Large Tank 240 - 40 Light SE wind

Entry Time approx. 1945 Time 85min MaxDepth 7m Temp 13-14deg

Vis 5-8m 7mm + undersuit

We arrived at the Carpark 30 minutes before entry time and were greeted by the sound of large waves and a few mosquitos. Gearing up, Simon was short of his main torch, but other than the now usual struggle to get wetsuits on over expanding bodies we soon headed down the track to find mild conditions with the tide well out at the waters edge. Doing final preps with mask and fins in the water some Whiting swam past auguring a good fishy dive. Due to our low torch problems we swam out together directly South to the inner ledge system and then to avoid crowding and silt, Simon went left with Michael while I went right. On the way out I stopped at the edge of the sand before hitting *Zostera* and rubble and located several *Mitrguraleus mitralis* and a small *Nassarius sp* by tracking in the sand. A nice adult *Pleuroploca australasiae* was also found buried in the sand which is unusual.

On reaching the reef system I almost immediately came across a fresh dead *Notocypraea comptoni* and then a nice *Penion mandarinus (oligospira form)* and a dead red *Phasianotrochus eximeus*. The ledge systems are quite extensive and in some areas look very promising, but live molluscs are difficult to see. While working along I managed to collect dead several specimens of *Engina sp*, *Nevia spirata*, *Dentrimitrella pulla*, *Trivia merces*, *Coralliophila sp*, *Mitra cf carbonaria*, *Clanculus consobrinus* and *Calliostoma allporti*.

I was very excited to find 2 good dead *Cumia mestayerae* and a good dead *Cumia bednalli*. Then on a section of elevated reef I found a single dead valve of *Notochlamys hexactes*, orange in colour. Needless to say I spent a lot of time in that area looking unsuccessfully for the other half or some of its friends. A single valve of *Chlamys aktinos* was also found nearby and a dead pair of *Pseudarcopagia botanica(?)*. Dead valves of *Pseudarcopagia victoriae* were also sighted nearby. In some of the caves a small dumpling squid was present and able to turn an interesting purple colour. This was probably *Sepioloa sp*.

Live shells encountered were *Modiolus areolatus* and *Barbatia pistachia*, *Ischnochiton cariosus*, *Haliotis laevigata* and *Haliotis emmae*, *Clanculus undatus* and *Clanculus flagellatus* – which was on the ceilings of caves in reasonable numbers and has the interesting behaviour of dropping off in sustained torch light. In the same area was an interesting red specimen likely a juvenile *Clanculus limbatus*. A few *Conus anemone* were seen and several nice *Cantharidus ramburi*. Finally in the last cave visited I found a colony of live *Clanculus allporti* on yellow finger sponge as always and outside the cave on weed a lovely green *Phasianotrochus eximeus*. Overall a productive night.

Non molluscan species seen included a Pebble crab on sand probably *Bellidilia levis*, the seastars *Tosia australis* and a nice specimen of *Nectaria cf australis*. Numerous *Ophiuroids* were under rocks, as were *Holothurians* and unidentified Shrimps.

A large unusual 70mm diameter globose Urchin was spotted in weed, *Amblypneustes sp* – possibly *ovum*. Numerous fish were present in the caves including Magpie Perch, Old wives, several Wrasse, schools of Bullseyes and many others which I could not identify. A single large crayfish was also seen.

Michael came up the beach after me to find Simon already at the car after sinus and chest problems. Simon collected a nice live *Cumia mestayerae*. Interestingly, it occurred to me after the dive that both my dead *Cumia mestayerae* were in a small cave with several larger sleeping fish nearby. Simon's specimen was in a cave as well. Makes me wonder if this species is ectoparasitic on fish as several of its relatives. Will have to check out the sleeping fish more closely next time.

Geoff Macaulay
