

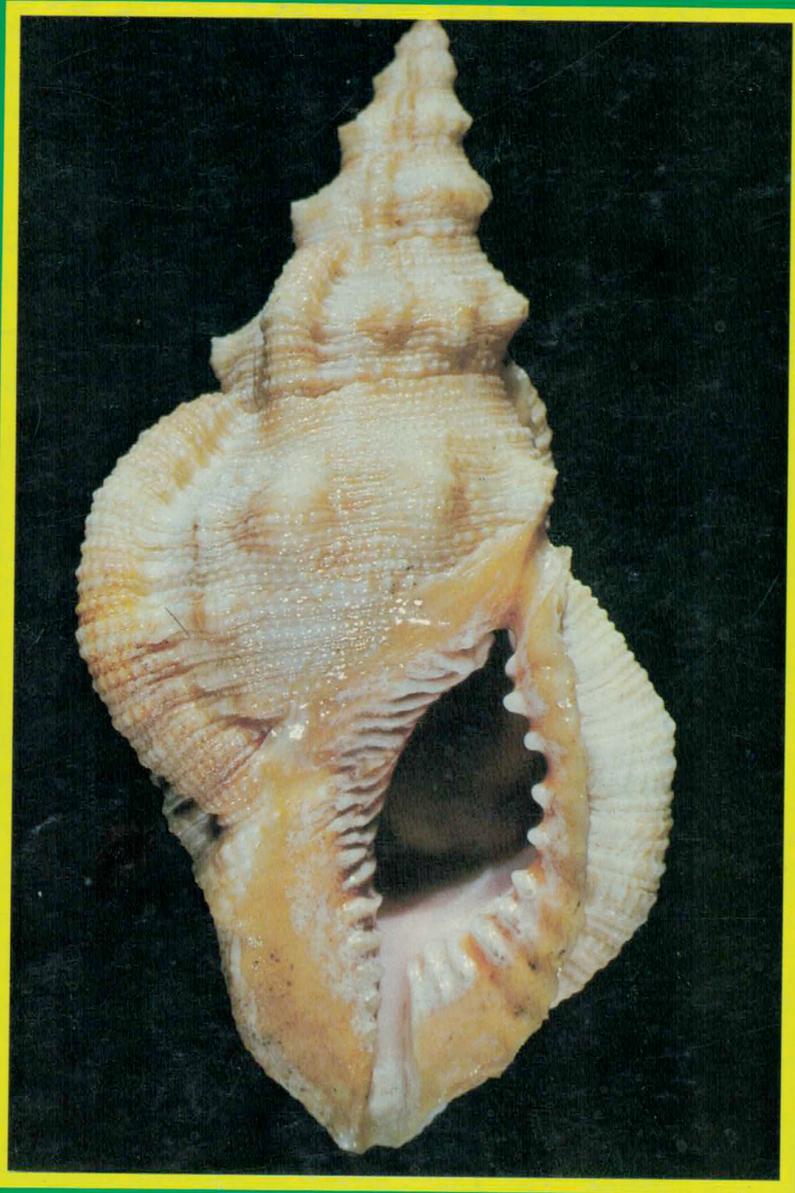
La Conchiglia

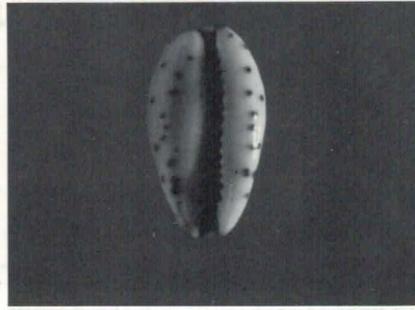
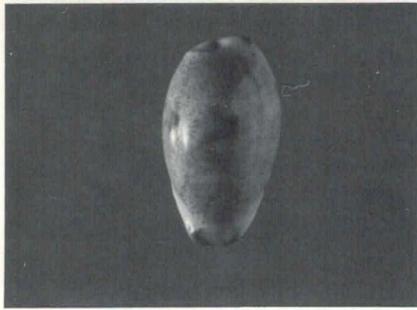
The Shell

Anno X X - N. 226 - 227 Gennaio - Febbraio 1988 L.3.800

Year X X - N. 226 - 227 January - February 1988 \$ 3.50

Sped. in abb. post. - Gruppo III - 70%





On page 10 of number 166-167 (Jan./Feb. 1983) we gave news of the finding along the coast of eastern Anatolia (Turkey) of a fresh dead specimen of *Palmadusta gracilis* (Gaskoin, 1849) by Mr. Manfred Bloecher (West Germany). Since then several other sporadic findings of this species were recorded, but without definite confirmation of its installation in the Mediterranean. Now we are able to give this confirmation, thanks to news from our Turkish friend, Mr. Ismet Turturk from Constantinopolis, a keen and expert malacologist. During a research trip last summer on

the coasts of Anatolia, he found, along with other interesting items of which we will gradually give notice, 14 live specimens of *P. gracilis*, two of which on eggs. These two were of course left where they were. All the findings took place near the locality of Tasucu, at depths of less than one metre, on stones under rocks. Therefore, there seems to be no doubt that this pretty little cowry can be considered to have become a permanent member of the Mediterranean malacofauna.

That makes 6 cowry species living in our sea.

Cypraea astaryi Schilder, 1971

We are republishing the photos which appeared on pg. 25 of the preceding issue (Nov./Dec.), so as to solve, thanks to our friend and collaborator Felix Lorenz jr., the mystery of the cowry reported by Aurora Richards. It is a specimen of *Cypraea* or, to be more precise, of *Cribrarula astaryi* which F. Schilder described in 1971 as a subspecies of *fischeri* and which today is universally accepted as a valid species. We were deceived by its origin (Marquesas Is.) and the shape. The distribution area of this species was considered to be limited to Samoa, Fiji and New Hebrides (Burgess). Actually sev-

eral specimens have been found in the Marquesas Islands and therefore the distribution definitely includes also that archipelago where *astaryi* lives along with *C. cumingii* Sow., 1832. It can be distinguished by the larger labial blotches, its darker pattern and its stronger teeth. The shape can vary notably, from elongated to deltoid, like the illustrated specimen. The strange conformation of the blotches, according to Mr. Lorenz, is due to injury suffered by the mantle of the mollusc. An analogous phenomenon can be found in some specimens of *C. histrio* Gmelin, 1791.



Synoptic tables

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This Mesogastropod group is gregarious (living in colonies often very numerous) and ubiquitous (in all the seas of the world, warm, temperate and cold, except for the extreme point of Southern America). It includes approximately a hundred species of which about ten (according to some Authors) live in the European seas (4 also in the Mediterranean) with numerous forms and varieties. They live along the littoral zones (hence the name) both of rocks and mangrove swamps in the tropical regions, in the intertidal areas, but often also above the spray line. A particular gill structure and the perfect seal of the solid corneous operculum allows the molluscs to survive also in dry environments, although they are definitely bound to the sea by their reproductive cycle. This group has been deeply studied and wide literature exists due to the facility of observing their behaviour and to their abundance (in certain areas there are groups of hundreds or even thousands of individuals per sq. m.). Notwithstanding this, not all the systematic and taxonomic doubts can consider themselves solved. They should probably be revised in the light of the new rules in art. 6b (aggregates of species) of the last edition of the Code for Zoological Nomenclature (1985).

The Anglosaxons call these shells "periwinkles" although there is nothing that gives the idea of similarity, in colour or form, between a *Littorina* and a periwinkle flower. According to J.E. Rogers (1908) the names comes from "petty winkles", that is, little shells, while according to R.T. Abbott (1983) it comes from "penny winkles", that is, shells worth a penny, referring to the value of *L. littorea* (L.) widely sold as food on the English and French markets.