

Asia indopacific IDENTITY CRISIS

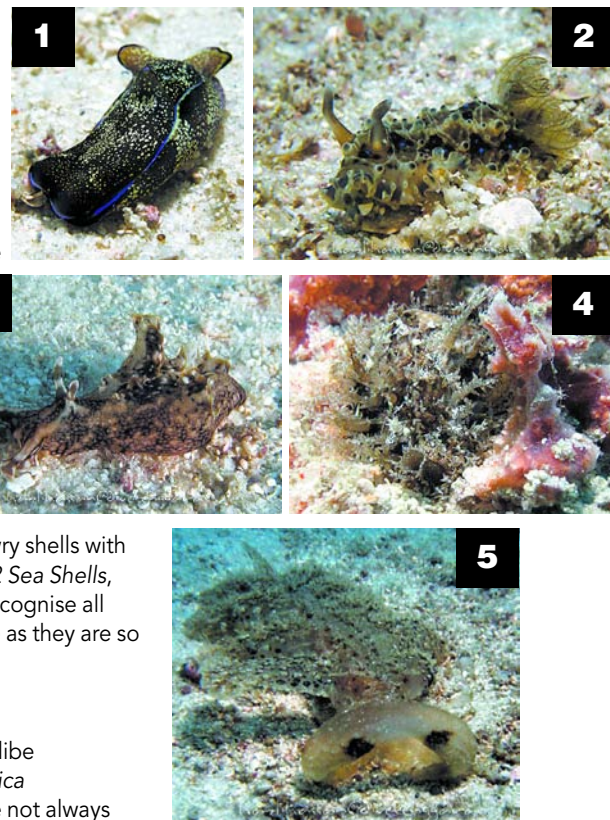


Neville Coleman worldofwater@nevillecoleman.com.au

Hi Neville,
Hope you can identify the nudibranch species I found at Pulau Redang, Terengganu Malaysia. Depth is around 20 meter flat bottom, sandy area. A patch of Halimeda and seapen. These species I couldn't find on the net. Thanks in advance.
Cheers, Bobo

Dear Bobo,
Yes, I can manage most of these critters and good to hear you're researching your images on the net – there's a wonderful amount of material available. (Pic.1)
FAMILY: Aglajidae
COMMON NAME: Blue-lined Philinopsis
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Philinopsis cyanea*
REMARKS: A very variable species, it grows to around 35 mm and occurs from the Red Sea to the Philippines, Indonesia, Japan, Papua New Guinea and across to Australia. (Pic.2)
FAMILY: Dendrodorididae
COMMON NAME: Denison's dendrodoris
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Dendrodoris denisoni*
REMARKS: Found across the Indo-Pacific region it grows to 80mm and is

variable in colour but the blue spots are always present. (Pic3)
FAMILY: Aplysiidae
COMMON NAME: Sea hare
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Aplysia* sp.
REMARKS: Your critter appears small and although it is often seen, there does not appear to be a reference as yet. (Pic4)
FAMILY: Cypraeida
COMMON NAME: Cowry shell
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Cypraea* sp.
REMARKS: Although I've managed to present the most comprehensive study of cowry shells with their mantles out in my book *2002 Sea Shells*, we still have along way to go to recognise all the species by their mantles alone as they are so variable. (Pic.5)
FAMILY: Tethydidae
COMMON NAME: Wondrous melibe
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Melibe mirifica*
REMARKS: These nudibranchs are not always easy to identify due to their fantastic shapes, attitudes they are photographed in and the fact that there are so many species yet to be described. Your specimen appears to be this species. Sometimes it is helpful to have some



idea of the size of creatures sent in for identification, for example this species grows to 300mm.
Best wishes, Neville

Dear Mr. Coleman,
A friend, Patric Decaluwé, just came back from diving in Manado and Lembah. This is his picture of a snail that is unknown to me. The photo was taken at Lembah Strait. Could you give any indication on the species name of this snail? Many thanks in advance.
Best regards, Daan Delbare, Institute for

Agriculture & Fisheries Research, Belgium
Dear Daan,
Thank you for your submission, I can certainly help.
FAMILY: Pleurobranchidae
COMMON NAME: Moon-faced euselenops
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Euselenops luniceps*
REMARKS: Found across the Asia/Indo Pacific region, this unique mollusc spends most of its life beneath the sand and only comes out to find food and to mate. It grows to 80mm and may be seen from low tide level down to and beyond 40metres. It will be featured in my new Nudibranchs Encyclopedia Asia/Indo-Pacific when it is published later in the year. All our best to Patric for such a nice image to work with.
Sincerely, Neville Coleman



Neville Coleman's discoveries include over 450 new species of sea creatures and thousands of new records. His Australasian marine photographic index contains over 100,000 images and he's published 65 marine natural history books.
Submissions: Send scanned photographs or digital images with your relevant details to *Identity Crisis* worldofwater@nevillecoleman.com.au
All published images will be credited to each copyright holder. Your submission advises permission for publication. Relevant details should include locality, date, depth, habitat, size, type of camera system and name of photographer and/or discoverer.

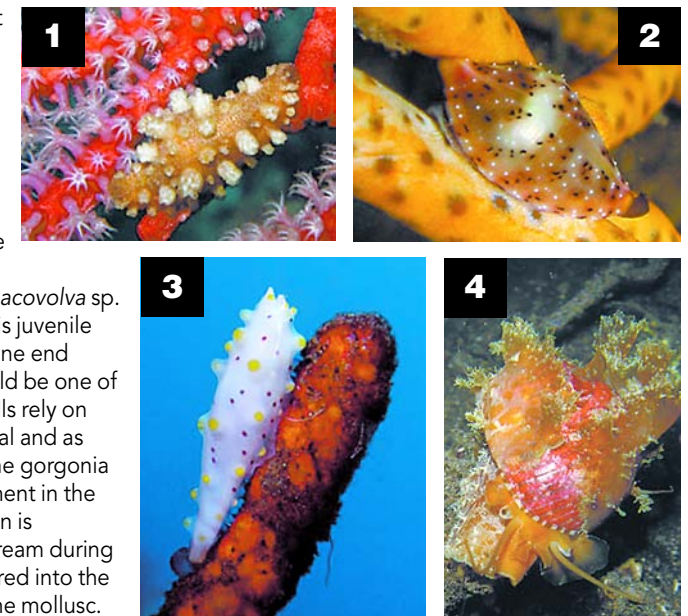


worldofwater@nevillecoleman.com.au

Hi Neville,
A good friend who's just been diving with me here in Bali tells me that you're really interested in new species of cowry shell. Can you help me with the identification of a few shells? The one of most interest to you is probably the one named ga-shell.jpg. Best regards, Graham Abbott, Bali

Dear Graham,
Good to see somebody taking an interest in the ovulids, they're an amazing family of molluscs and have fascinated me for over 40 years. No problem naming your critters, your images are excellent for such small subjects and I know them well. Your GA shell is pretty common in Australia but I only have 4 reports of them from Indonesia and Malaysia. Pic 1
FAMILY: Ovulidae
COMMON NAME: Semper's egg cowry
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Prosimnia semperi*
REMARKS: Found across the Indo-Pacific, this species grows to around 15mm when adult. The molluscs are able to mimic the colour of their host gorgonian and also mimic the sea fan's polyps on their mantle. Pic 2
FAMILY: Ovulidae
COMMON NAME: Dyed egg cowry
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Primovula tinctura*

REMARKS: Grows to about 8mm and lives on the sea fan *Euplexaura* sp. Shells can be red or pinkish. Mantle has red and white speckles. Pic 3
FAMILY: Ovulidae
COMMON NAME: Spindle cowry
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Phenacovolva* sp.
REMARKS: This specimen is juvenile (very fragile) and has had one end broken off and as such could be one of several species. These shells rely on their camouflage for survival and as such mimic the colour of the gorgonia they grow up on. The pigment in the branches of the host sea fan is absorbed into the bloodstream during feeding and this is transferred into the shell as it is produced by the mollusc. Pic 4
FAMILY: Trochidae
COMMON NAME: False ear shell
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Stomatella impertusa*
REMARKS: Grows to around 25mm and lives under rocks during the day and is sometimes seen out in the open at night when it comes out of hiding in



search of food. The shell is covered by a very well developed mantle. It looks a bit like a small abalone shell but has no respiratory holes in the shell as does an abalone. You can see all these critters and 2200 more in my Catalogue of Indo Pacific Mollusca, *2002 Sea Shells*, which has the largest published display of living ovulids in the world. Best wishes Neville

Hi Neville, thought you'd be the best one to identify this shark, skate or whatever. A friend actually asked this sometime ago – her stepson Bryan caught this fish from the beach at Raft Point in Darwin. Bryan put it back and it's still swimming around .wondering if you can help.
Kindest regards, Carole Cram
Dear Carole,
It certainly is an awesome fish and very difficult to get pictures of underwater.
FAMILY: Rhinidae

COMMON NAME: Shark ray
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Rhina ancylostoma*
REMARKS: A rarely observed species ranging from the Red Sea to Japan and Australia, it grows to around 270 cm and has a very characteristic shape and generally inhabits sandy areas. It is sometimes brought up as bycatch by trawlers and is considered to be a rare species.
Sincerely, Neville



Hi Neville,
Been a while... still haven't caught up with Val and the Sea Star book, so have to ask for your help with this one. Many thanks,
Greg Heighes, DiveKomodo

Dear Greg,
I'm not getting in the water much due to my biggest project Nudibranchs Encyclopedia which has your nice little blue *Aldisa* nudibranch in it. This sea star is well known and presents no problem.
FAMILY: Ophiasteridae
COMMON NAME: Indian star
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Fromia indicus*

REMARKS: Found across the Asia/Indo-Pacific, this little star grows to around 50 mm and comes in several different patterns. It mostly occurs around coral reefs and generally feeds on algae and bottom detritus. Diurnal of nature, it is a broadcast spawner squirting reproductive products out of spores in its central disc and may have four, five or six arms. Best wishes, Neville



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Dear Neville Coleman,
I just started taking pictures and already I'd like to ask you for ID help. We have tried to identify this fish by checking all available books at the dive center. At the same time a BBC camera team was at the Seychelles and they gave me your name and said to ask you. The picture was taken on 4 October 2007 at Whale Rock dive area, Beau Vallon Bay, Mahe, Seychelles at about 8 to 12m. Many thanks for your help! Regards, Bertram Kunze, Germany

Dear Bertram,
Your image is certainly good enough for an identification. The Seychelles is a great diving location. I'll be going back in October 2008 for the Subios Underwater Festival as one of the presenters.
FAMILY: Labridae
COMMON NAME: Queen rainbow wrasse
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Coris formosa*
REMARKS: You have captured the female of the species. The males grow to 50 cm are green and have bars down the sides. An Indian Ocean species, it's also found in the Maldives. Generally inhabits sandy, broken reef areas and feeds on a number of invertebrates.
Best wishes, Neville

Hi Neville,
I photographed this nudibranch in 20m at Rottneest Island WA (The site is called the Russian Sub). I used an Olympus SP350 with an INON Z240 strobe. Sorry about the quality of the photo but I'm still getting used to the camera and strobe setup. I am not sure how common the nudibranch is but I have never seen one like it at Rottneest before.
Cheers for the great articles in Sport Diving.
Cheers, Nic Matich



Dear Nic,
Thanks for your nice comments, it's great to know so many people appreciate the work that goes into this project. Yes, there are some excellent nudibranchs at Rottneest Island. Some have only ever been found at that location. I discovered many new species there, including the one you've sent, in 1972 off Fremantle.
FAMILY: Chromodorididae
COMMON NAME: Robo's chromodoris

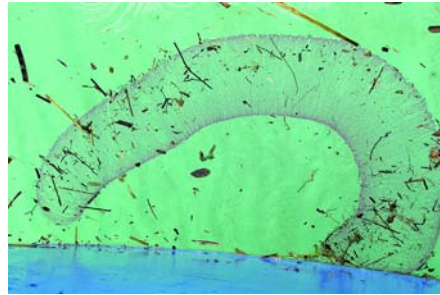
Dear Neville,
I was looking through photos I'd taken on a recent dive trip in Malapascua, Philippines and found a couple of strange ones of a whip goby which looks like it's got corkscrews coming out of its side. Can you tell me what the cork screw things are? Hopefully they're not as sinister as they look.
Sincerely, Debbie Leenutaphong Bangkok, Thailand



fine. Unfortunately the object of your inquiry is very sinister.
FAMILY: Gobiidae
COMMON NAME: Loki whip goby
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Bryaninops loki*
REMARKS: This little fish has picked up a very unwelcome hitchhiker in the form of a copepod parasite which has bored into the fish to feed on its body fluids and the cork screw processes you refer to are the copepod's eggs masses.
Best wishes, Neville

Dear Debbie,
Thank you for your interest, your image is

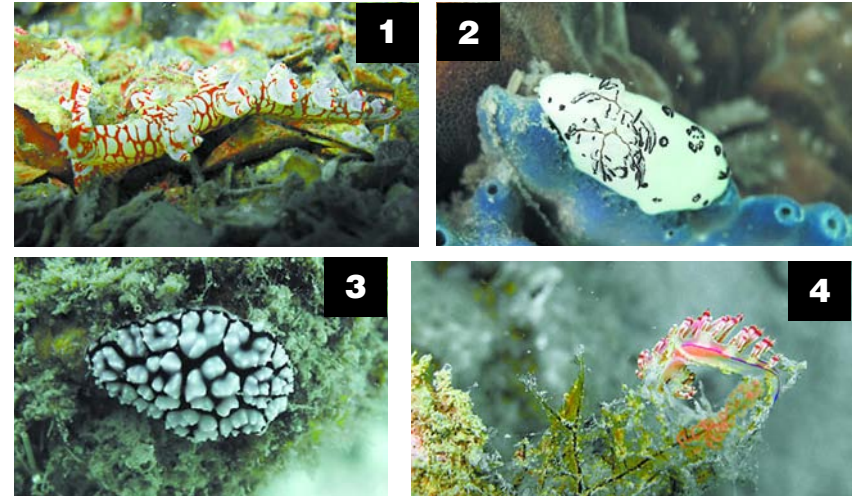
Hi Neville,
This pic I took in Jais Aben/Madang in Papua New Guinea. Everybody who saw it was startled. We were on a double-dive in Madang lagoon, and had stopped near a little island for our surface interval when two of these pink things came floating along (the blue foreground is the boat). They were about 70-80 cm long and seemed to be hollow. They looked fragile, but drifted under the boat and came out the other end undamaged. Later while snorkelling I found another one on the bottom, about 1.5m long and twice the diameter of the one in the pic. Two local guys (the boat operator and dive master) and an Aussie dive instructor with 6000 dives, and the guys at Aquaventure had no idea what it is. Eggs I guess? We'd appreciate your help.
Best regards, Michael and Debbie



mystery and worth sending. As yet we don't know what animal lays these mauve-coloured pelagic egg balloons even though they're known from the Maldives to PNG. It's possible that as they originate from the sandy sea floor of lagoons they belong to some kind of sand-dwelling mollusc. However, if that's correct they're probably laid at night. Just goes to show that we have a lot of discovery to do.
Best wishes, Neville

Dear Michael and Debbie,
Many thanks for your query, it certainly is a

Dear Neville,
I saw the Identity Crisis in Sportdiving magazine June/July 2007 and thought I have to email for some ID. These images were taken in the Gulf of Thailand. Hopefully the images are of such quality that you can help me identifying the critters.
Thanks in advance.
Kind regards, Bart Kluskens, WWF - CMDCP, Cambodia



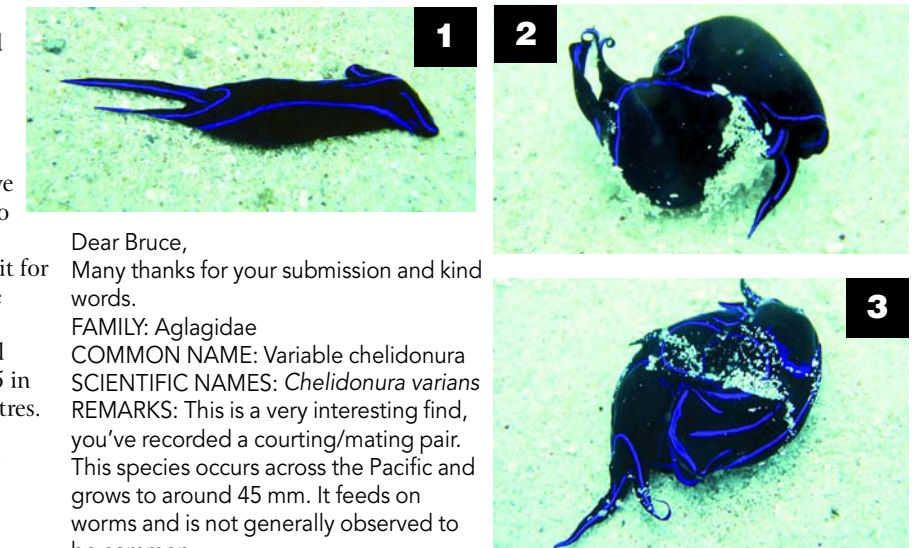
Dear Bart,
I'm happy to help and your images are good enough to make ID's.

Pic 1
FAMILY: Bornellidae
COMMON NAME: African bornella
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Bornella* sp.
REMARKS: To my knowledge this is an undescribed species which occurs from South Africa to Western Australia and has recently been recorded from Thailand and Malaysia. It comes in several colour patterns but is always red and white and is not considered common.
Pic 2
FAMILY: Discodorididae
COMMON NAME: Funeral jorunna
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Jorunna funebris*
REMARKS: Occurs across the Indo-Pacific region where it feeds on the blue sponge *Haliclona* sp.

Though the black pattern is variable, the colours remain stable throughout its distribution.
Pic 3
FAMILY: Phyllidiidae
COMMON NAME: Pustulose phyllidia
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Phyllidia pustulosa*
REMARKS: Widely distributed across the Indo-Pacific area the species is highly variable but colours remain stable in pink and black. It grows to around 50mm and feeds on sponges.

Pic.4
FAMILY: Flabellinidae
COMMON NAME: Red-lined flabellina
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Flabellina rubrolineata*
REMARKS: A common species generally found on hydroids upon which it feeds. It grows to 30 mm and is distributed across the entire Asia/Indo-Pacific. The species (similar to most nudibranchs) is very variable.
Best wishes, Neville

Hi Neville,
I've admired your creature ID articles for years, and finally have some photos for you.
First of all, in *Sportdiving* you had a photo of a blue lined philinopsis, and said "This species is very variable and yours appears to have the main characteristics. This is why imagery is important, we have so little material from all known localities as to what colour variations actually exist."
I may have some photos of a variant (no yellow on it for a start) taken in the Mamanuca Islands, Fiji, beside Namotu Island at the start of Wilkes Passage, on Monday 22 October 2007, at around 10.30 am. All were on a sand bottom. I used an Olympus Mu 725 in an underwater housing, at a depth of about 5-7 metres. I didn't use a flash.
I'm just starting down the identify-the-small-critter path, so was very happy to find these. I'd be even happier if you confirm they're variants of blue line philinopsis!
Thanks for all the good work, Bruce Ellis



Dear Bruce,
Many thanks for your submission and kind words.
FAMILY: Aglagicidae
COMMON NAME: Variable chelidonura
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Chelidonura varians*
REMARKS: This is a very interesting find, you've recorded a courting/mating pair. This species occurs across the Pacific and grows to around 45 mm. It feeds on worms and is not generally observed to be common.
Best wishes, Neville



Hi Neville,
I took this picture in Jervis Bay. I found this little guy at about 31 metres and was wondering if you could tell me what it is?
Have a great day.
Regards, Brett Goldin, Victoria, Australia

Dear Brett,
Thank you for your submission, I can sort this out for you.

FAMILY: Dorididae
COMMON NAME: Chrysanthemum neodoris
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Neodoris chrysoderma*
REMARKS: This nudibranch is only found in southern Australia. It grows to 22 mm and feeds on sponges.
Best wishes, Neville

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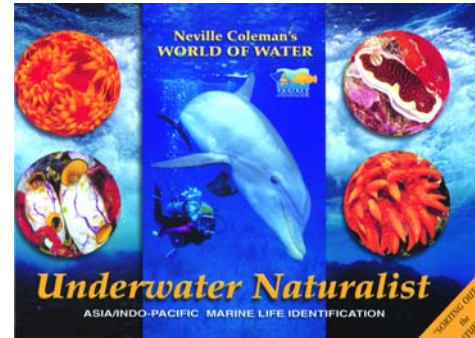
Hi Neville,
I was having a swim down at Byron Bay recently. There was quite a strong northerly wind blowing and a cuttle bone surfing on the chop collided with me. I picked it up for a look and found this little fellow had been surfing on it. I was pretty surprised, I never heard of surfing nudis before, apart



from the body-surfing glaucus. It was about 15 mm long. I expect it's some type of Phyllodesmium but I couldn't find it in the book. Any ideas on what it might be? I took these shots using my d80 with a

60mm lens. Thanks for your great column.
Regards, Gerard Braithwaite,
Mullumbimby

Dear Gerard,
Thank you for your words of appreciation, we all do our best to manage the column, but I get a bit behind sometimes due to its popularity. Your curiosity and excellent images of your surfing nudibranch have allowed us to share your unusual find.
FAMILY: FIONIDAE
COMMON NAME: PINNATE FIONA
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Fiona pinnata*
REPLY: Your unusual discovery lives out its entire life just under the surface of the ocean. It has a cosmopolitan distribution and is generally found on driftwood or old cuttlefish bones that have lots of goose barnacles which are its main food. It grows to 20 mm and may be grey or blue in colour.
Best wishes, Neville



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