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December 2000

nudibranchNEWS

One year on....

The January 2000 issue is only issue Miquel did not present his column since becoming part of the nudiNEWS team. His reason, Núria, the Pontes first baby was born on January 1st.

On behalf of the NudiNEWS team and our readers:

Feliç aniversari Núria

in this issue

editorial

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Those of you with other beliefs or practises, we wish you good will and good cheer.

One of the really interesting learning curves with editing this newsletter is dealing with many people in different parts of the world. Even through this is a small newsletter it is truly global. This made me wonder if it would be possible to create a network for travelling nudibrancher's? Do you know a great destination and would like to share it? Do you want to dive with like minded people? Researchers do you need more bodies on the ground/in the water? Maybe some of you would like to get together in Indonesia, New Guinea or the Philipines for a week of nudibranching once a year? Have a think about it.

Thanks to the contributors who sent in articles this month. Dave Harasti's discoveries to the Red Sea and Thailand are documented on this website. See the feedback session for details.

Akos Lumntizer, a regular contributor to Bill Rudman's site has prepared a session on nudibranch dive sites in Sydney.

new species

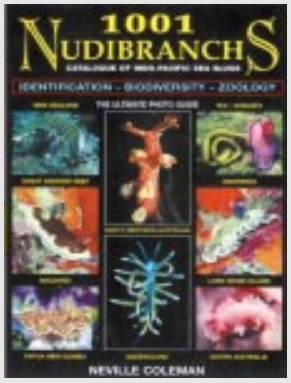
Terry Gosliner and Dave Behrens' have described two new species, *Chromodoris buchananae* and *Hypselodoris babai. C buchananae* is named in honour of **Carol Buchanan** from Coffs Harbour in NSW, Australia. Carol has contributed a great deal to the opisthobranch knowledge of the Solitary Islands/ Coffs Harbour region.

H. babai is named in honour of their colleague and friend Dr. Kikutaro Baba. To quote from the paper, " He has been an inspiration to us throughout our careers in opisthobranch systematics. For more than almost 70 years, Baba has been carefully documenting the remarkable diversity of Japanese opisthobranchs. This is a truly remarkable achievement".

Bob Bolland in Okinawa provided the specimens.

Reference:

Gosliner, T.M. and D. W. Behrens. 2000. Two New Species of Chromodorididae (Mollusca: Nudibranchia) from the tropical Indo-Pacific, witha redescription of Hypselodoris dollfusi (Pruvot-Fol, 1933)Proceeding of the California Academy of Sciences 52, (10):111-124.



1001 Nudibranchs – Neville Coleman
To order your at the special pre-release price contact Wayne Ellis
Email: glaskin@ozemail.com.au

slug sites

sydney

akos lumnitzer

Sydney's amazing Slugs

True connoisseurs of sea slugs are indisputably aware of the true beauty and diversity of these magic critters in the waterways of Australia's biggest city – Sydney. The majority of divers are totally oblivious to the complex relationships between slugs and their habitats. They generally swim over many of these amazing creatures without realising and only occasionally spot the ones that really stand out Many species of sea slugs occupy our home waters - including bubble shells, pleurobranchs, sea hares as well as the ever present and so spectacular nudibranchs.

The waters of Sydney are considered temperate, but during the warmer months, generally from about December to February, the East Australian Current – which originates near the equator and flows in a southerly direction- washes past the New South Wales coastline in giant eddies bringing many species of creatures from tropical waters still in their larval form.

Let's take a quick look at the different underwater habitats available to nudibranch (and seaslug) lovers.

Sheltered environ:

Camp Cove (max depth 18m), **Clifton Gardens** jetty (max. depth 7m), **Parsley Bay** (max. depth 14m), **Nielsen Park** (max. depth 13m) and **Shiprock** (max. depth 19m) are all excellent places to observe the slug species most likely to reside in such sheltered terrain.

The only real problems at the dive sites listed above are that currents can occur and also passing ferries and other boat traffic could constitute an added element of danger to the unwary. Ferries and boats are a potential hazard around the harbour sites- Camp Cove, Clifton, Parsley and Nielsen, but currents during the running tides at Shiprock can play real havoc with the inexperienced or ignorant. The only other real concern is the limited visibility sometimes common at these habitats.

Another location I should mention is the mangroves located at Kurnell, although I have never snorkelled/ dived them I did pass in a sea kayak and it is on my list of "must dos" for the near future. According to Dr. Richard Willan in a recent email, I am missing out on many species by not covering the mangroves.

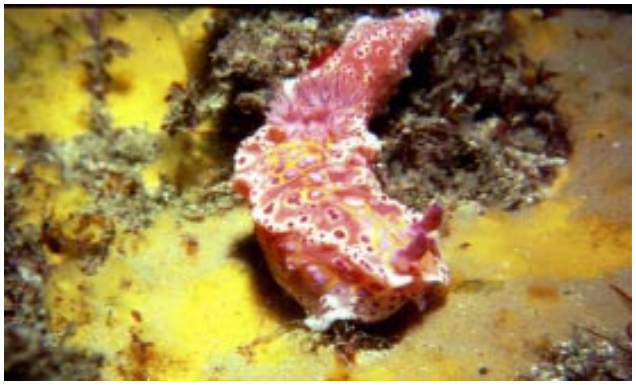
Open ocean dive sites

My favourite sea slug spotting dives are **Kurnell** (max. depth 24m), **Shark Point** (max. depth 30m), **La Perouse area** (max. depth 20m) **Oak Park** (max. depth 14m) and **Mahon Pool** (max. depth 32m). These dive sites are truly wild in their own way. Many species of slugs are seen at one time or another. We are indeed blessed by nature to have such diverse areas available for the cost of an airfill.

The single biggest danger at these sites is the ocean itself, where many inexperienced divers (or inexperienced by Sydney standards) come to them and attempt to dive in conditions beyond their abilities, thus risking life and limb for a dive. It is very important to know the dive sites very well; or at least go with a RELIABLE guide who does!

To sum up, Sydney has a rich and diverse opisthobranch fauna. You only need to review the species described by George Angas in 1864 to see this. Recently I have come across a suspected *Gymnodoris sp.*, which I think is not yet described. Many more await discovery.

Akos (Akhos) lives in Sydney, Australia. His soon to be wife loves sea slugs.



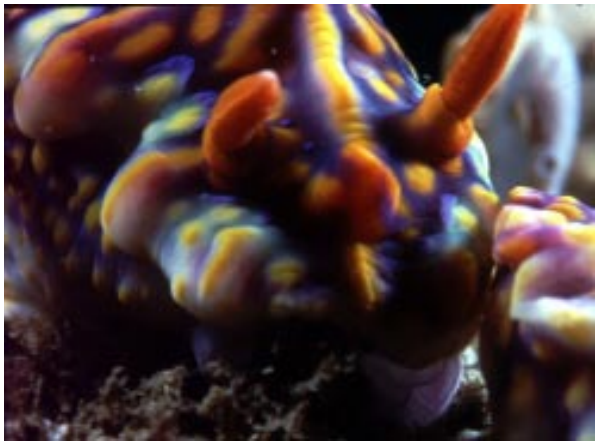
Ceratosoma brevicaudatum Abraham, 1867
Oak Park

Chromodoris roboi Gosliner & Behrens 1998
Kurnell, Botany Bay

Chromodoris tasmaniensis Bergh, 1905
Vinces's Point La Parouse

Phyllodesium poindimiei (Risbec, 1928)
Shiprock Port Hacking

Jorunna sp.
Camp Cove Sydney Harbour



Ceratosoma magnifica (Eliot, 1910)
Kurnell Botany Bay

nudibranchs

sunshine coast

wayne ellis

In April this year Nerida Wilson, for partner Dan, Leslie Newman and I were able to collect on the low tide. The images you see on this page are some of the species sighted.

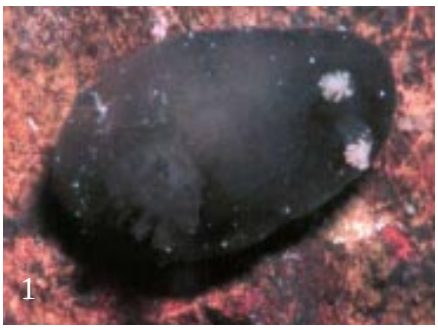
1. ***Hallaxa iju*** *Gosliner 1998*
   This is a common intertidal species on the rock platform at Point Cartwright. Nerida was able to confirm the identification of the specimen.

2. ***Doriopsis pecten***
   Nerida found this species under a rock. It is the first specimen I have seen at Point Cartwright.

3. ***Diveridoris aurantionodulosa*** *Rudman, 1987*
   A beautiful species, again found by Nerida.

4. ***Hopkinsia plana*** *(Baba, 1960)*
   Nerida found this specimen with eggs on bryozoa growing on some algae. Remarkably well camouflaged, it is easy to see how this species can be overlooked.

Also found were *C. decora, N.simplex, Discodoris cf fragilis* and *Berthella stellata.*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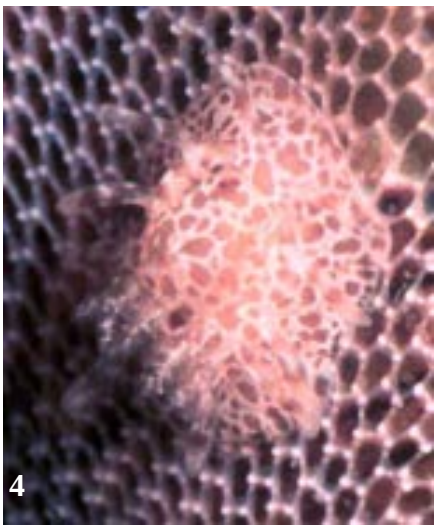
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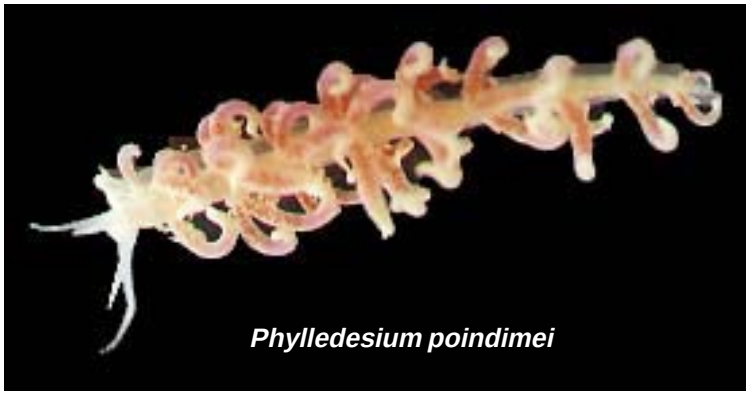
Photos © 2000 nerida wilson

Dermatobranchus cf sp



Phylledesium poindimei

November 20th 2000

SCUBA diving for the first time in several years I began to think I would be better off working the low tides on the rock platforms. There was not a nudibranch to be seen. One metre (2-3') visibility didn't help.

Finally after what seemed an eternity, a nudibranch. A 2cm ***dermatobranchus*** (image left) loomed larger than life, (narced at 3 metres).

Swimming along the wall, well actually groping from one rock to the next I noticed a pinkish growth. Thinking it to be a coral of some type I kept groping forward.

On the way back I noticed the "coral" again. Stopping to have a look, I spotted my error. What I had found was in fact, ***Phylledesium poindimei*** (Risbec, 1928). Our little friend was approx 40mm long and crawling on some algae. Collecting the lot I headed back to shore.

An arabica/eglantina cowrie loomed out of the muck as did a ***Hyselodoris obscura.***

Back on the beach I set up to photograph the beasts and noticed eggs on the algae (see image), possibly belonging to ***Phylledesium poindimei***. A small ***Gymnodoris cf alba*** also made an appearance. It had been hiding in the algae.

The Sunshine Coast Opisthobranch Species List will be updated soon at www.diveoz.com.au.

Photos © 2000 wayne ellis

mistaken identity

miquel pontes

Last month we published the wrong picture for *Chromodoris krohni.* When the article was written this was our best identification. It was only after publication Miquel discovered the picture was of *Chromodoris britoi.*

Included are the real *Chromodoris krohni* (top) and *Chromodoris britoi* (bottom). Visual identification can be confusing at times when two species share so many common traits.

feedback

I've just returned from a month's diving in the Red Sea and Thailand and have created two new pages on my site Check them out at:

http://www2.dynamite.com.au/davidh/redsea/redsea.htm

http://www2.dynamite.com.au/davidh/Thailand/nudibranchs/nudibranchs.htm

Also, I have a attached a pic of this 'thing' (bottom image) I found in Thailand, I don't think it is a Nudibranch or Flatworm - do you have any idea of what it is?

Do you know the name of the other nudibranch (top image).

Cheers,
Dave
http://www2.dynamite.com.au/davidh/

Ed: I thought the top image might be *Jorunna funebris.* Anyone know the second beast?

photos ©2000 dave harasti

miquel pontes

Hypselodoris fontandraui

This chromodorid first described by Pruvot Fol in 1951, is a medium sized nudibranch by Mediterranean standards, reaching lengths up to 30 mm.

The body is coloured dark blue to violet, with a bright yellow band running around the dorsum. Parallel to this outer band there are some light blue spots. There is also a central yellow band that runs from the front of the animal, where it shows a characteristic anchor design, passing between the rhinophores and to the tail. This central line is not uniform but it branches at certain points.

The rhinophores are darker than the base colour of the body, and have the ability to hide into their sheaths when the animal is disturbed. These sheaths have a white spot on the inner part of their base. The branchial plumes are coloured dark blue and have two yellow lines in the outer margins that join in the tip of each plume.

Lives on rocky bottoms at depths shallower than 25 meters. It preys on sponges of the gender *Disidea*. It is considered an infrequently encountered species.

Readers can find more information at Erwin Köhler's site for Mediterranean Nudibranchs: **Medslugs** (http://www.medslugs.de/E/Mediterranean/Hypselodoris_fontandraui.htm)

The picture with the black background (below) has been produced by carefully taking the animal from its habitat onto a piece of black plastic for close up observation and photography. Once the observation was finished the animal was returned undamaged to where it was taken from greatly increasing its survival chances.

Our diving "motto" is always to leave only bubbles and take only pictures.

photos ©2000
albert ollé and lluís aguil

book review

dave behrens

Mollusca: The Southern Synthesis

P.L. Beesley, G.J.B. Ross & A. Wells (Eds.) with 70 contributing authors

This two volume set is the definitive scientific monograph on molluscan systematics of Australia. Invaluable to malacologists worldwide, the volumes contain thousands of detailed drawings and photos describing the anatomy and functional morphology of all classes of mollusca, from Aplacophora through pulmonates. The text covers 423 families, which in fact, occur around the globe. Opisthobranchs are covered in Chapter 16, in Part B (the second volume). Following 39 pages of general introductory discussion of the classification of gastropods there are 120 pages devoted to opisthobranchs, including 18 pages of valuable bibliographic reference material (there are 7700 references total for both volumes).

Like the other sections, the opisthobranch section contains spectacular colour photographs showing the major taxa, highly accurate line drawings of body anatomy, shells and egg masses, and scanning electron micrographs of selected radula.

The true value of this monograph is the picture it paints showing the systematic relationships between classes, families and genera. It is the rich use of photographs and drawings, such as the examples shown here, that demonstrates not only the diversity of morphological characters, but how each taxonomic category is held together by a series of consistent traits.

This set is an absolute must for those of you (professional or amateur) seriously interested in this group, its morphology and physiology, its natural history, its biogeography and phylogeny, and its history of discovery.

Details:
Hardcover, 1234 pages, in two volumes.
8 ¼ x 11 ¾ inches
1998. CSIRO Publishing, Melbourne