

Plesiocystiscus politulus, another California species found in British Columbia

By Bill Merilees

Say *Plesiocystiscus politulus* quickly, three times after a few beers, and the ramification of utterances should be quite staggering! But joking aside, this species, was located on the northwestern coast of Vancouver Island this past summer. Both at Kyuquot (50° 02'N) and in the Bunsby Islands (50° 06'N), *Plesiocystiscus politulus* (Dall, 1919) (Rick Harbo photo) was located at four of thirty-two areas sampled by means of a scraping. Apparently, these are the first records, for this species, north of Santa Barbara, CA (J. McLean pers. com.). At all four locations it was found in company with the ubiquitous *Granulina margaritula*, British Columbia's other minute (2-3 mm) 'cowrie looking', white snail.

These records bring to three, possibly four, the number of California gastropod species that have recently been located in British Columbia waters, that are not known to frequent the coasts of Oregon or Washington. The others include *Astyris auriantica* (Dall, 1871), *Graphis shephardiana* (Dall, 1919) (Merilees, 2012) and *Haliotis rufescens* Swainson, 1822 (Merilees, 2009). Whether this is an artifact of collecting effort, oceanic currents regimes, el Nino events or some other factor is speculative, but would make an interesting study.

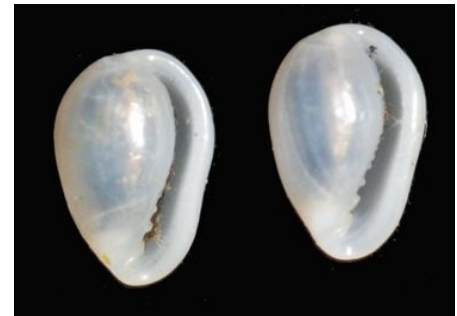


Copyright: Ronald Shimek Ph. D.
This amazing photo of a *Granulina margaritula* (2.5 mm) crawling about was captured by Ron Shimek, while diving at 10 meters in Pole Pass, between Crane and Orcas Islands, San Juan Islands, Washington. 2.5 mm



Above - Polite Marginella, *Plesiocystiscus politulus*
Below - Pear-shaped Marginella, *Granulina margaritula*.
Both species are 2-3 mm. Rick Harbo photos

Separating these two species, difficult in the field due to their small size, is relatively easy under a dissecting microscope. *Plesiocystiscus* is slimmer, translucent, with a faint but noticeable spire, and an aperture only about 80% of shell length. *Granulina* (Rick Harbo Photo), in comparison, is more pear shaped, opaque, without a noticeable spire, with the aperture 90% of shell length.



Acknowledgements:

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References:

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