

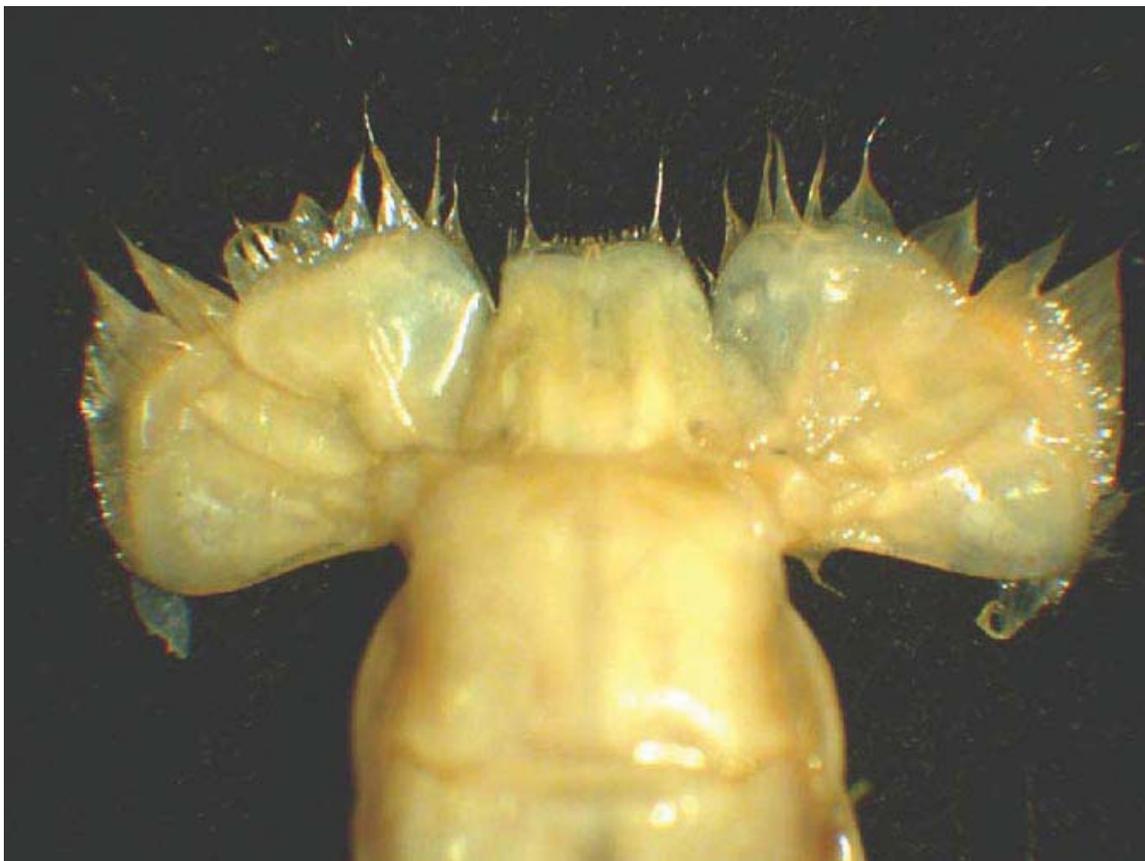
SOUTHERN  
 CALIFORNIA  
 ASSOCIATION OF  
 MARINE  
 INVERTEBRATE  
 TAXONOMISTS



Sept/Oct/Nov/Dec, 2008

SCAMIT Newsletter

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Urosome of *Neotrypaea gigas*; Photo by Lisa Haney

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The SCAMIT newsletter is not deemed to be a valid publication for formal taxonomic purposes.

**SEPTEMBER 8, 2008**

The meeting was held at the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts Marine Biology Lab. President Larry Lovell opened the meeting by summarizing last month's meeting. They reviewed all non-polychaete groups in Ed. 5 of the SCAMIT species list. Today we'll be reviewing the polychaetes and will pay particular attention to the names in red print which include new additions (many from Bight '03), provisional species, etc.

Larry passed around an article he found on SignOn San Diego titled "Sub to explore undersea islands" by Sandra Dibble, Union Tribune Staff Writer, August 23, 2008. The article focused on the "DeepSee" submersible and its adventures off the coast of Baja California Sur. The project is a joint collaboration with researchers from the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, the Universidad Autonoma de Baja California Sur, the Centro Interdisciplinario de Cierrcias Marinas in La Paz, and Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego.

Next Larry announced some upcoming meetings. On October 16<sup>th</sup>, Bruno Pernet will come to LACSD and give a seminar on the genetics of *Neotrypaea californiensis* and *N. gigas*. There may be a 3<sup>rd</sup> species but it can not be separated by morphological differences. It occurs in shallow water in Mexico.

On November 17<sup>th</sup>, Katja from MorphBank will be at SCCWRP to hold a meeting for the electronic database work group. Others are also welcome to attend. Katja will present some new user-friendly software that they have been working on. Orange County Sanitation Districts has donated \$7500 towards the development of a taxonomic database some of which is being used to bring Katja to Southern California. There are tentative dates for two more workshops with Katja; Tuesday, November 18<sup>th</sup> at City of San Diego and Thursday, November 20<sup>th</sup> at Orange County Sanitation Districts. These hands-on workshops will teach participants how to submit their images into Morphbank.

On Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, SCAMIT will host a Christmas Party/Potluck at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium in San Pedro. SCAMIT will provide a ham, sodas, coffee, utensils, and plates. The party will be held from 6-9pm, and the bookstore may be open for an hour or so before the dinner starts. Leslie has been volunteered to bring a cake. Others please bring a side dish to share. There will be Christmas music playing and possibly a visit from Santa. Larry hopes everyone can attend as it promises to be a great time.

John Chapman will be down in Morro Bay in January or February to collect a specific species of amphipod, and we hope to have him come further south to lead a discussion on amphipods at a

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**24 May 2010 - 9:00 - 4:00** (note the different hours).  
DNA Barcoding workshop at Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts.

**14 June 2010 - 9:30 - 3:30.** Photo Imaging II workshop at City of San Diego. Co-hosted by Dan Ituarte and Nick Haring.



SCAMIT meeting. The meeting would include a review of the amphipod chapter in the new Light and Smith manual.

For the March meeting, Les Watling and Sarah Gerken plan to travel to Los Angeles during their spring break and lead a meeting on cumaceans at the Natural History Museum.

There will undoubtedly be several meetings in 2009 regarding problematic animals from the Bight'08 project. These will be scheduled once we start processing the samples and see what taxa need to be addressed.

Next Larry led a discussion on taxonomic training by SCAMIT. Many of these ideas were discussed at the end of last month's meeting. There have been requests for training at a fairly elementary level so that interns, new hires, etc., can learn taxonomy from the "Old Guards" as Larry put it. A significant number of SCAMIT members will be retiring in the next 5 years or so, and these people contain a wealth of taxonomic information. It has become a critical time where this information and expertise needs to be passed on to newer taxonomists. As an organization, SCAMIT feels this is a very important issue. It was suggested at the last meeting to hold two meetings per month; one would be in the usual SCAMIT format, and one would be a training workshop directed towards new(er) taxonomists. Specimen exchanges would be used as a way for individuals to practice their identification skills and standardize taxonomy amongst different agencies. University students would also be invited in the hopes of recruiting taxonomists. Ron Velarde suggested having the two meetings per month on consecutive days to make it easier for people who will be traveling.

Dot Norris gave us a report from the City and County of San Francisco. They will be hiring two people, and the current employees are organizing a taxonomic training program for them. Dot will train on polychaetes, Kelvin Barwick will train on mollusks, and Patricia McGregor will train on crustacea. Dot commented that Mike Kellogg, senior marine biologist, is very positive about SCAMIT's training program and wants to send people down to participate.

Leslie Harris (NHMLAC) was approached by Darolyn Striley from BioSynC (Biodiversity Synthesis Center, Field Museum, Chicago) which is one of the partners of the Encyclopedia of Life, to submit a proposal on polychaetes. BioSynC provides support for synthetic research that advances knowledge of biodiversity and adds to EOL content. Leslie tentatively proposed that SCAMIT would create an expanded version of our Taxonomic Listing covering Alaska through northern Pacific Mexico. Polychaetes would be done first as a pilot program. The grant money would be used to support a workshop for polychaete taxonomists and data managers to create a united regional taxa list derived from their separate lists. Conflicts and nomenclatural problems would be addressed during the meeting to reach this goal. Additional money will be sought from regional stake holders to add ecological and taxonomic information to the list. Leslie's idea has been approved by the SCAMIT officers and the final proposal will be submitted to BioSynC by the end of the year.

Ron Velarde announced that September 29<sup>th</sup> is the tentative date for the City of San Deigo to use the sediment profile camera in San Diego Bay.

Larry led the remainder of the meeting which was a review of the polychaetes in Edition 5 of the SCAMIT species list. He addressed the names in red print which mainly consisted of Subclasses, Subfamilies, newly encountered species, and new synonyms.



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**OCTOBER 16, 2008**

The meeting was held at the CSDLAC Marine Biology Laboratory in Carson, CA. President Larry Lovell opened the meeting and introduced guest speaker Dr. Bruno Pernet, CSULB and special guest Dr. Dave Jacobs, UCLA. Members in attendance were: Larry Lovell, Ron Velarde, Bruno Pernet, Jim Roney, Lisa Haney, Dave Jacobs, Ananda Ranasinghe, Dean Pasko, Ken Sakamoto, Carol Paquette, and Don Cadien.

Larry then moved on to upcoming meetings. There will be a Database Group meeting at SCCWRP November 17, to be followed by three Morphbank mini-workshops at CSD (18<sup>th</sup>), LACSD (19<sup>th</sup>), and OCSD (20<sup>th</sup>) by Deb Paul. We will start 2009 with a January meeting at NHMLAC with guest speaker Dr. John Chapman leading a review of his Amphipoda chapter in the Light and Smith Manual. Other planned meetings are a two-day workshop in March on Cumacea with Drs. Les Watling and Sarah Gerken.

Lisa Haney and Bruno Pernet then took over leading the meeting and presented their preliminary results on taxonomic issues between *Neotrypaea californiensis* (Dana 1854) and *N. gigas* (Dana 1852) that have been troubling to local taxonomists. They have genetic results supporting two distinct species, but are having trouble coming up with clear morphological character states that taxonomists can use to separate the species. Bruno provided an overview of the distribution and natural history of the two species as an introduction. He illustrated the sexual dimorphic characteristics between the sexes and their variability. Dave Jacobs then briefly commented on his research in Mexico with *Neotrypaea* that parallels Bruno's work.

After lunch members took to the microscopes to review specimens that Bruno, Lisa, and Dave provided for examination. Males and females of individuals from different size classes were examined in hopes of finding good morphological characters to discriminate the two species. Others members attending brought specimens from their collections for review as well. After several hours of examination and head scratching, it was decided that Lisa would retain much of the material and continue working on the issue.

UPDATE: The results of her continued review and work on the problem is now posted in the taxonomic toolbox on the SCAMIT website. You can find her document under Arthropoda-Decapoda-Thalassinidea-Neotrypaea Characters.pdf. Lisa produced a good photographic comparison illustrating several male and female character states for use as identification aids. Each character state is present with photographs of the two species side by side with informative text describing the morphological differences.

**NOVEMBER 17, 2008**

Members in attendance: Larry Lovell, Wendy Storms, Ron Velarde, Cheryl Brantley, Christina Thomas, Tony Phillips, Dorothy Norris, and Don Cadien.

Larry Lovell started the meeting by announcing that SCAMIT was looking for an assistant webmaster to help Jay Shrake, our webmaster. He then announced that future newsletters were going to be double issues to try to get us caught up. Next on the agenda was upcoming meetings. Larry is going to be attending the annual SAFIT meeting in Davis this month. The January 2009 meeting will be at LACNHM and will address Amphipoda with John Chapman. Participants will be going over the Light's Manual chapter and additional taxonomic issues. The February meeting will be on the 17<sup>th</sup> (possibly 18<sup>th</sup> as well) with Dr Todd Haney on Caprellids. He has the world of literature on the subject so if you need any references, let him know. March 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> will cover



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Cumaceans with Les Watling and Sarah Gerken at LACNHM. It will involve a Light's manual review plus other questions. Sarah is currently revising the Lampropidae.

The annual SCUM meeting will be January 24<sup>th</sup> at CalPoly Pomona – Angel Valdez will be hosting.

Additional information presented at the meeting: The taxonomic training meetings are still in development, a volunteer is being sought to help organize the effort. Mr Barwick might be the perfect candidate for the job considering his upcoming responsibilities at Orange County Sanitation Districts.

Larry Lovell and Leslie Harris are working together on a polychaete species list effort for BioSynC which is a subset of Encyclopedia of Life. Grant money is available to put together a species list for the entire west coast (Bering Sea to tip of Baja) and from the intertidal to hadal depths. Portland, OR will be the venue to get everyone together to make an initial stab at this monumental task. Leslie will make a possible grant submission as early as December or within the following year.

Our website is up but we currently have no password protection with the new server.

Cheryl Brantley of LACSD is making progress on the newsletter scanning project; she thinks she has finally gathered all the old, archived newsletters. The help of an OCSO intern will be enlisted for assistance with the scanning. It was suggested that maybe a workgroup should be formed to double-check historic voucher sheets and determine how to display them on the website appropriately.

An update on the ontologies project progress: Kelvin Barwick will be working on mollusks (they will be broken up into Class); Christina Thomas and Cheryl Brantley will be tackling the echinoderms (they will also be broken up into Class); Rick Rowe and Ron Velarde have the annelids (Rick has a list of terms and definitions – it would probably be best to have definitions associated with these lists so we can apply them uniformly); Tony Phillips is almost done with the cumaceans; the nemertean and flatworms are mostly complete; Dean Pasko and Don are still working on other arthropods; we are still waiting to check with John Ljubenkov about cnidarians; other phyla are still up for discussion; Don can tackle the sponges perhaps with assistance from Megan Lilly.

Katja and Dawn Olson (CSD) will be working after the first of the year to create species pages with many of the related links populating each page (taxonomic tools, morphbank images, references, etc). We are gathering station lists/info to submit to Wendy to have incorporated into our database

New/Evolving priorities: finish establishing our ontologies so that we have a common language; incorporate images into morphbank (everyone); post our species list database on website; develop species pages with links to tools.

Wendy Enright (CSD) gave an update on the progress of getting the Ed5 Species List into an Access database. Larry and Don Cadien then announced that an errata sheet for Ed5 is being prepared in the next few weeks to account for truncations and a few misspellings. Those changes will be incorporated into the Access database.

Then our guest speaker for the day, Deb Paul from Morphbank, gave a presentation about the image database. There is exciting potential for sharing our images within our own group as well as spreading the SCAMIT gospel to the general public. Deb will be giving presentations at San Diego, LA County and Orange County to educate us all on the new image submission process as well as how to use the image website to take advantage of all the nifty features available. This will become more and more valuable the more images that we submit. Her powerpoint presentation is available on the morphbank website: [www.morphbank.net](http://www.morphbank.net).



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**REPORT ON ATTENDANCE AT THE SAFIT ANNUAL MEETING  
21 November 2008, Davis, CA, by Larry Lovell, SCAMIT President**

I attended the SAFIT Annual Meeting as President of SCAMIT and as a LACSD employee. Approximately 25 people attended the meeting. President, Joe Slusark, with the California Department of Fish and Game, Aquatic Bioassessment Laboratory (ABL) opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. He provided a review of the past year's accomplishments discussing membership (43 members currently), workshops held, newsletter launch, and website launch. Results of the recent election process were also announced with Christopher Rogers (EcoAnalysts) and Raphael Mazor (SCCWRP) being elected Vice-President and Treasurer, respectively, for two-year terms. The other three officer positions, President, Secretary, and Member at Large, will be voted upon next year.

Kim Kratz, SAFIT secretary, then discussed planned development of the website and presented the logo designs that have been submitted to date. The current logo submittals were deemed unsatisfactory. The website is still under construction, but something similar to the SCAMIT website is desired. It was suggested and voted upon to provide design elements and allow more time for additional logo submittals.

Vice President, Christopher Rogers, opened the floor to discussion of the four newsletters produced to date. These have been basic and lacked some information than could be included. The SCAMIT newsletter was noted as a model and discussed as what is desired by SAFIT. I commented on voucher sheets, keys, meeting information, news, job postings, as items typically included in SCAMIT newsletters in the past.

Joe Slusark then led a discussion on future SAFIT meeting schedules and topics. Frequency of meetings and locations were discussed. A quarterly meeting format was agreed as being desirable. Two of the meetings each year would be fixed. A winter annual organizational meeting will be held in conjunction with the California Aquatic Bioassessment Workgroup (CABS) meetings every November and a summer Hazardous Materials (HazMat) training workshop will be held alternate years in Davis and Southern California. This past summer the HazMat workshop was held in Davis and it was noted that SCCWRP offered to host the 2009 HazMat training workshop at their offices in Orange County.

The other two meetings would be taxonomic workshops focusing on a particular group or a "Bugfest", an open meeting that is devoted to helping taxonomists identify problem animals. If necessary, additional workshop meetings could always be scheduled to take advantage of new developments or the availability of visiting experts. There are several taxonomic workshops covering various freshwater groups in various stages of development. Joe commented that SAFIT also wished to continue co-hosting workshops with SCAMIT. I noted that one topic of common interest is oligochaete taxonomy. Joe also mentioned estuarine insects as a possible joint workshop topic in the future.

Joe next brought up the idea of SAFIT holding a digital photography workshop on taxonomic images. Nearly all members attending were interested in such an opportunity. Joe mentioned that Ken Davis, a professional photographer in the area, who is also an invertebrate taxonomist, might be interested in leading such a workshop. I took this opportunity to detail the recent Morphbank SCAMIT workshops and the relationship SCAMIT is fostering with Morphbank in regards to our taxonomic database and digital image archive.



One problem mentioned by Joe and discussed by others is the large geographic coverage of SAFIT. To date all meetings have been held in California. While most of the membership resides in California, it was noted that holding meetings in other states (Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah) would allow members in those states to participate and perhaps serve to recruit additional members from those states. I was able to share the similar geographic situation and difficulties keeping its organization active experienced by the Northern Association of Marine Invertebrate Taxonomist (NAMIT).

Pete Ode (ABL) was then asked to comment on the SWAMP Quality Assurance (QA) program. He first commented that SWAMP is funded by two sources: wastewater discharge fees through the Regional Monitoring Monetary Programs and EPA Clean Water Act funds. Pete said there are budget cuts looming regarding the EPA side of funding which would probably reduce that amount from \$4 million to \$2 million dollars per year. These budget cuts would impact the SWAMP program. Pete is in charge of developing the SWAMP QA program. He said that the goal is to have the SWAMP Biocriteria program established in 2-3 years and that QA is now a high priority. A Quality Assurance Program Plan (QAPP) addressing all aspects (including sort, ID, and data entry) is currently planned for implementation in 2009, depending on budget cut impacts. There was discussion during lunch regarding freshwater and marine taxonomic QA programs and the importance of recognizing that differences between laboratory processing will have an impact on implementation of a statewide QA program.

After lunch Brady Richardson and Christopher Rogers discussed the current status of the Standard Taxonomic Effort (STE). SAFIT receives SWAMP funding to maintain and update the STE taxa listing on a periodic basis. Brady and Christopher are reviewing comments submitted for improvement on the current document and will be developing recommendations for a new version next year. They asked that all members be sure to provide feedback to them in a timely manner so that all comments can be fully reviewed for consideration.

Joe next brought up taxonomic certification as a topic. He thinks this is a direction State SWAMP regulations might potentially require. The North American Benthological Society (NABS) taxonomic certification program was brought up as an example. Several members present hold NABS certification and are not impressed by the certification process. They criticized the inadequate process used to assess the taxonomic knowledge required to identify the broad range of organisms potentially encountered. All agreed that training efforts aimed at standardizing taxonomic name usage and providing updated identification tools are more beneficial than certification programs. I commented that SCAMIT has discussed this topic several times in recent years and has identified similar concerns and arrived at the same conclusions. Joe commented that he would present these comments if advisement from SAFIT were sought by SWAMP on this topic.

The meeting ended with brief discussions on membership outreach and education outreach, both important activities that promote awareness of SAFIT. As a small volunteer organization, similar to SCAMIT, they must take advantage of any and all such opportunities that present themselves. They will hold another annual membership meeting next November.



**CHRISTMAS 2008**

On Saturday, December 6th, SCAMIT hosted a Christmas Party/Potluck at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium in San Pedro from about 5-9 pm. It had been 10 years since the last Christmas party and several members wanted us to start again. There were about 30 persons who attended including members, family, and friends. SCAMIT provided a Honeybaked ham, sodas, coffee, utensils, and plates. Members who attended brought a collection of yummy side dishes, appetizers, and desserts.

The bookstore was open for an hour or so before the dinner and members received a 10% discount off purchases. There was Christmas music playing over the PA system all night. Everyone had a great time visiting and exploring the animals in aquaria. There was even a visit from Santa for the kids. Thanks to CMA and the staff for sponsoring us, having the gift shop open, and helping out with set up and tear down of tables and chairs. We hope to be back next year.

- Larry Lovell, SCAMIT President



Please visit the SCAMIT Website at: [www.scamit.org](http://www.scamit.org)

**SCAMIT OFFICERS**

If you need any other information concerning SCAMIT please feel free to contact any of the officers at their e-mail addresses:

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Hard copy back issues of the newsletter are available. Prices are as follows:

- Volumes 1 - 4 (compilation)..... \$ 30.00
- Volumes 5 - 7 (compilation)..... \$ 15.00
- Volumes 8 - 15 ..... \$ 20.00/vol.

Single back issues are also available at cost.

The SCAMIT newsletter is published every two months and is distributed freely to members in good standing. Membership is \$15 for an electronic copy of the newsletter, available via the web site at [www.scamit.org](http://www.scamit.org), and \$30 to receive a printed copy via USPS. Institutional membership, which includes a mailed printed copy, is \$60. All correspondences can be sent to the Secretary at the email address above or to:

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