



**Southern California Association of
Marine Invertebrate Taxonomists**

3720 Stephen White Drive
San Pedro, California 90731

October, 2002

SCAMIT Newsletter

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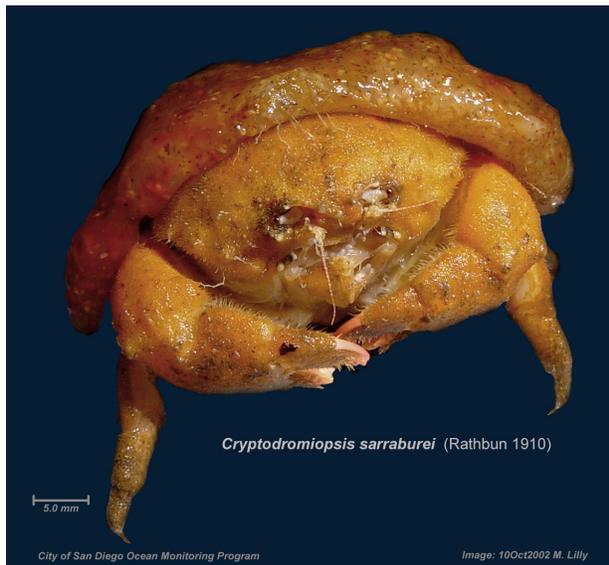
SUBJECT:	Collections Moving Day
GUEST SPEAKER:	none
DATE:	6 December 2002
TIME:	9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p. m.
LOCATION:	Cabrillo Marine Aquarium & LACMNH

AN ASIDE

The reader will notice that although this is the October NL, the minutes below are from November's meeting. The October NL is taking longer to prepare and in my efforts to try and keep newsletters flowing, I am producing the October NL with the minutes and information I have available to me, which is November. Please look for the October minutes to be in next month's newsletter. Thank you for your patience and understanding
– M. Lilly

NOVEMBER 14

Kelvin Barwick called the meeting to order at approximately 9:30 and began by discussing upcoming meetings. The December meeting will be held on the 6th and will consist of volunteers moving the SCAMIT specimen



Cryptodromiopsis sarraburei (Rathbun 1910)

5.0 mm

City of San Diego Ocean Monitoring Program

Image: 10Oct2002 M. Lilly

CSD station SD-16
8 October 2002, 27m
Identified by D. Pasko

voucher and literature collections from their current location at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium to LACMNH. Hopefully this will provide easier access to the collections.

The January meeting will be on the 20th at the City of San Diego's Marine Lab and will be the first in a series of meetings, entitled: Pre-Bight 2003 Familiarization Meetings. This first meeting will deal with deeper-water Crustacea, 200-500 m. The purpose is to acquaint taxonomists with the deeper water fauna they may not have encountered before. The meetings will be conducted prior to the next Bight survey to improve identifications.

February 10 will be the "Future of SCAMIT" meeting that our fearless leader, Kelvin Barwick, has called. Please start brainstorming now and have suggestions for the direction(s) that you would like to see SCAMIT go in the future. It will be held in the SCCWRP conference room.

It is under tentative discussion that there will be another DELTA workshop in March. As the details are finalized, we will let you know.

The April meeting will cover the Gastropod family Eulimidae. It will be conducted by Kelvin Barwick and will be at the City of San Diego's Marine Lab. Speaking of Eulimids, Kelvin has put out a call for any specimens people can spare. He is only interested in those from the Southern California Bight, as he is limiting his focus to the species encountered in our programs. He is particularly interested in their parasitic association with certain echinoderms. If you find Eulimids still attached to a host animal, he would request that you send both organisms if possible. If they have since fallen off, please send just the Eulimids but with a note stating with which echinoderm species they were associated.

With that the business portion of the meeting was concluded and it was time for the Biolink presentation. Following is Rick Rowe's gracious contribution to the NL. He offered to

write a brief biography of Steve Shattuck and concisely compile the massive amounts of information that were presented that day. The secretary would like to extend her thanks for his assistance.

The November 14th meeting of SCAMIT at the Natural History Museum in Los Angeles was led by an ant taxonomist, Steve Shattuck. Steve traveled from Australia to demonstrate the taxonomic data management software application BioLink. He leads the team developing the application, and has traveled across the globe as a key participant in the planning and development of efforts to catalog our planet's biodiversity.

Steve began his studies in taxonomy at Oregon State University, completed his masters at the University of Kansas, and in 1991 obtained his Ph. D. from the University of California, Davis. He moved to Australia to conduct postdoctoral studies and now considers Australia his home. His list of publications includes a monograph on Australian Ants (1999) and coauthorship of a bibliography of ant systematics (1996). For a complete biography see:

<http://www.ento.csiro.au/staffhome/sshattuck.html>

While his primary interests are taxonomic, Steve realized that managing his collections data and publications required computer tools that were overly complex to learn, inadequate to manage all of his taxonomic data, or nonexistent. Steve and several of his coworkers at CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, Australia) began developing Platypus, a taxonomic checklist and collections management software application in 1996 which has led subsequently to Steve guiding the development of an application that would



integrate the management of collections data (somewhat like Platypus) and descriptive morphological data (somewhat like DELTA) within a single software package, BioLink.

Increasing the efficient management of taxonomic data, and broadening its distribution are goals of the BioLink development effort. Steve considers those goals essential to improving the valuation taxonomic studies receive, and crucial to increasing the contributions of taxonomists defining biodiversity. Steve demonstrates how information can be shared at his Australian Ants Online website

<http://www.ento.csiro.au/science/ants/default.htm>

On Wednesday afternoon, November 13th, Steve met with SCAMIT members, Leslie Harris, Rick Rowe, and several others of the staff at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County to discuss applicability of BioLink to our museum and monitoring programs. Much of the time was spent introducing Steve to what SCAMIT is and does, and how we can organize and share the taxonomic information that our members use and generate. Steve is willing to work with our organization's members to test BioLink and provide customization specific to the requirements of our marine studies.

At Thursday's SCAMIT meeting, Steve spent most of the day demonstrating BioLink and answering questions about its functions. He used version 2.0, currently undergoing beta testing, that includes a module for working with descriptive (morphological) data. Because BioLink is being built by a taxonomist, the user interface contains terminology and structure familiar to SCAMIT members. The primary entry point into a database is through the Taxon Explorer, a hierarchical tree structure comprised of the familiar parent-child relationships (e.g. family-genus, genus-subgenus) provided by standard

nomenclature. As phylogeny changes, parents (higher taxa) can be moved by drag and drop and the changes cascade through the database. Some of the forms for entering data contain terminology that is slightly different than that typically used in marine studies, but Steve promised that customization of data entry forms will be added soon. There is an import wizard to assist bringing spreadsheet and other database files into BioLink and export tools for moving data out to interactive key programs (IntKey via DELTA and Lucid). BioLink uses SQLServer as its database engine and is designed to function in a multiuser environment.

The application can manage bibliographic materials, and Steve mentioned that he manages about 20,000 references of his own in the application. Multimedia files, including images, sounds, morphometric spreadsheets, and mpegs can be managed, and an electronic gazetteer is included for mapping and reporting distributional data. Typical information utilized by collections managers can be entered and accessed including everything from loan and storage information to label generation.

Of primary interest to SCAMIT members, who recently became officially introduced to DELTA (Descriptive Language for Taxonomy) through a weeklong workshop at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, were the descriptive (morphological) data management components which are included in this latest version of BioLink. Steve spent considerable time demonstrating how BioLink can manage that data. Some of the procedures were very familiar to those who have used DELTA, but there are some differences that may be advantageous. Those differences will be evaluated by several SCAMIT members over the next several months. Many more features of BioLink and a much more detailed description of the application can be found at the BioLink website

<http://www.bioblink.csiro.au/>



The meeting ended with Steve offering to come back to Southern California for a two-day BioLink workshop in the summer. He passed out some copies of BioLink 2.0 (beta) and stayed after the meeting to answer additional questions about the application. Several SCAMIT members will be testing the software (most of the Annelida section of the SCAMIT edition 4 species list has been imported into BioLink), and communicating problems to the BioLink team. A SCAMIT 20th anniversary tee shirt is on its way to Australia as a small token of thanks to Steve for his most generous service to our organization.

Directions: Take 110 Freeway to San Pedro. Turn left on Gaffey, left on 4th Street. Proceed to Mesa Street. Park on the street. Enter at 401 S. Mesa. The Loft Gallery 2 is on the 3rd floor.

POLYCHAETE FINE ART SHOW

- by Leslie Harris

Nearly two years ago I became acquainted with Libby Hartigan, an artist with a budding fascination with polychaetes. Since then she's made polychaetes a focal point of many of her artworks in a variety of media. Libby's intriguing & evocative artworks tend to be impressionistic, unlike the anatomically correct scientific illustrations with which we're all familiar. On December 5th, the Loft Gallery 2 will host a reception to celebrate the opening of an exhibit of Libby's paintings & prints. All wormophiles & other invert lovers are invited to attend. We hope to see you there- Leslie Harris

Show title: Habitat for an unknown polychaete
Paintings and prints by Libby Hartigan
with slides of San Pedro polychaetes by Leslie Harris

Date: Thurs. Dec. 5 to Dec. 31 2002

Location: Loft Gallery 2, 401 S. Mesa, San Pedro

The reception will be held on Thursday Dec. 5 from 6 to 9 p.m., coinciding with the "First Thursday" cultural outreach which occurs the first Thursday of each month in San Pedro. After the reception, the gallery is open by appointment only by calling the Loft Gallery (310) 831-5757.



Please visit the SCAMIT Website at: <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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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.

