

Sand Builder Worm

Family: Sabellaridae

Sabellaria vulgaris

Description

Size: 1/8" wide or less, up to 1" long.

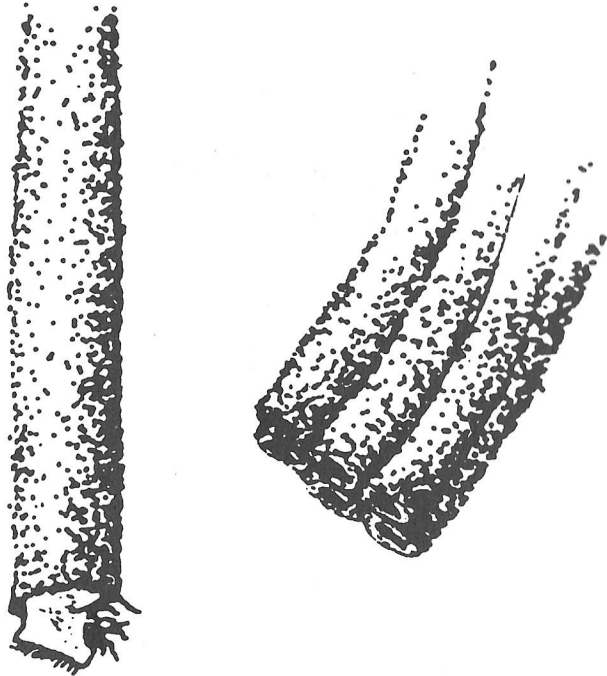
Characteristics: Well-defined head region; heavy conspicuous body bristles.

Habitat

Lives in a tube within a colony of tubes built close enough together to create a honeycomb-like effect; found in sandy bottoms in intertidal and subtidal zones on Sandy Hook's bay side.

Edibility

Inedible



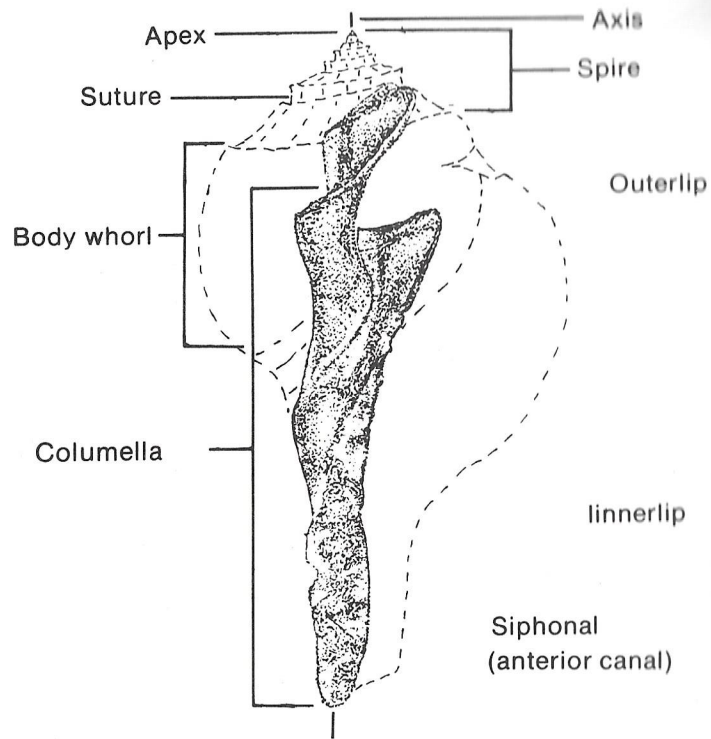
Sand Builder Worm

SNAILS, CLAMS, OYSTERS, MUSSELS AND SCALLOPS

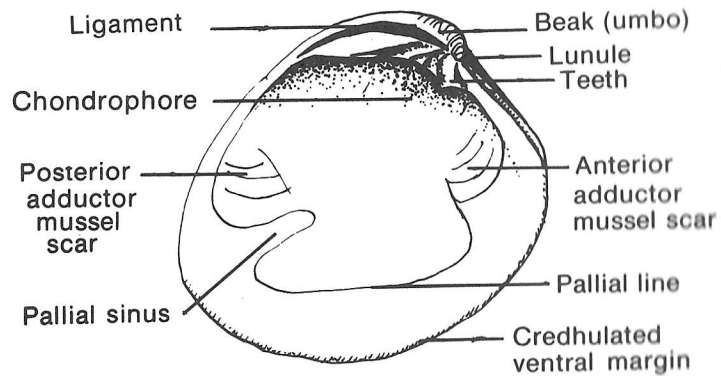
Phylum: Mollusca

The molluscs are second in number of species only to the arthropods with its vast number of insect types. Over 80,000 living species are included in phylum mollusca, and an excess of 35,000 fossil species are known to have existed. Mollusca has a rich geologic history, and the animals' mineral shells have provided a rich fossil record dating back to the Cambrian period (500-600 million years ago).

There are two distinct body structures unique to this phylum — the mantle and the radula. The mantle is a fold in the body wall which secretes a calcareous shell; the radula is a rasping tongue specialized for feeding. The foot of a mollusc, used for creeping, is sole-like in most snails, slugs and chitons, and somewhat hatch-shaped in many bivalves. The head region is usually distinctly defined and various organ systems are contained within its visceral mass. Many members of this phylum lack one or another of these features, but as a group they are easily recognized.



A Gastropod Mollusc



A Bivalve Mollusc

Common Periwinkle

Family: Littorinidae

Littorina littorea

Description

Size: Up to 1-1/4" long.

Characteristics: Conical shaped with 6-7 flat whorls; heavy, sharp lip contains a hard, brown, horny surface that covers the shell opening (operculum); has no navel-like formation that is present in similar snails.

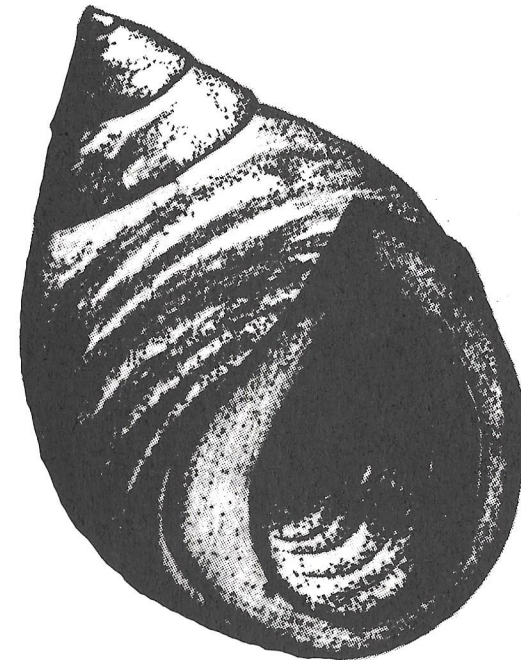
Color: Dull brown, with thin reddish lines.

Habitat

Clings to rocks, pilings or other hard surfaces; abundant along the groins of Sandy Hook's ocean and bay regions.

Edibility

Good; considered a delicacy by Europeans.



Common Periwinkle

Common Marsh Snail

Family: Melampidae

Melampus bidentatus

Description

Size: Up to 3/4" high, 1/4" wide

Characteristics: Thin, oval-shaped shell; the shell opening is the widest opposite the tip and contains two thin-lipped, toothed folds, with 1-4 short, horizontal ridges on the outer lip.

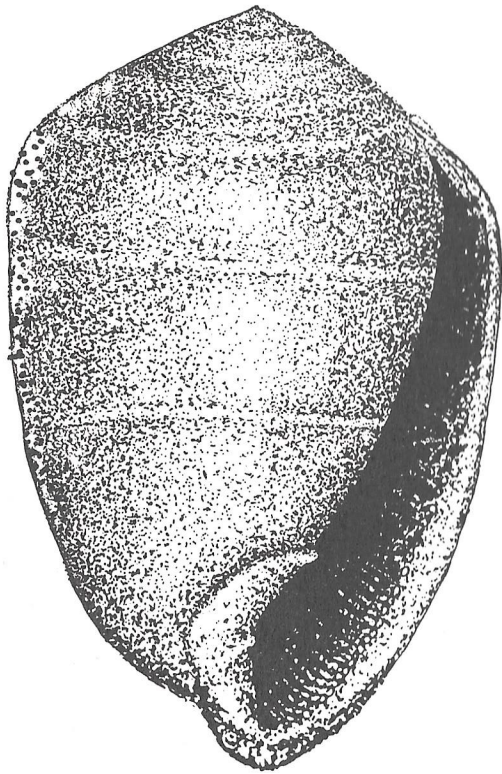
Color: Light brown.

Habitat

Found in and around salt marsh grass above the high tide level.

Edibility

Inedible.



Common Marsh Snail

Channeled Whelk

Family: Melongenidae

Busycon canaliculatum

Description

Size: Up to 8" high, 5" wide.

Characteristics: Recognized by its deep, widely channeled seam and heavy skin-like outer covering; the thin shell has a thin outer lip with strongly shouldered whorls that may be beaded in young whelks; their dead shells are frequently used by hermit crabs for shelter.

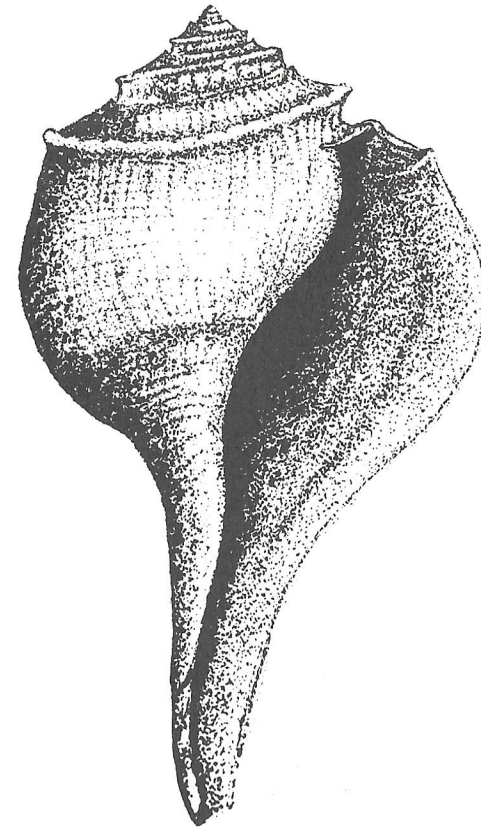
Color: Yellow-tan.

Habitat

Inhabit the bay regions of Sandy Hook; found on bay and ocean beaches after a storm or extremely high tide.

Edibility

Fair.



Channeled Whelk

Knobbed Whelk

Family: Melongenidae

Busycon carica

Description

Size: Up to 6" high, 3" wide.

Characteristics: Right-handed, pear-shaped spiral; smooth outer surface with approximately nine low, rounded swellings on the shoulder of the body whorl; has a strong, horny structure (the operculum) attached to the foot.

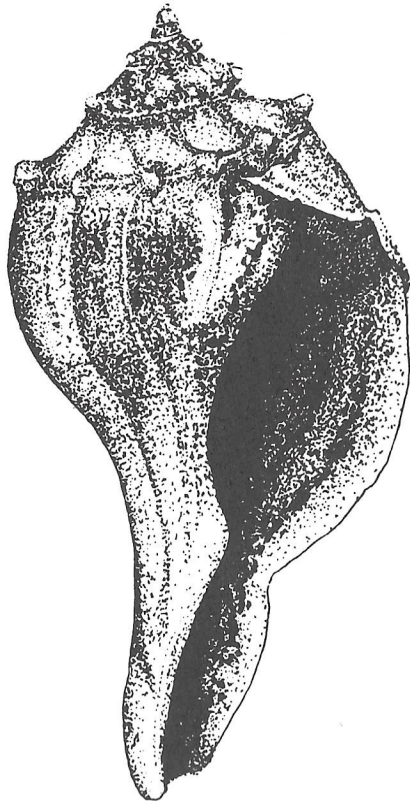
Color: Outside shell is yellow-gray, with brownish-purple axial streaks on young whelks; inside shell is orange, yellow, or brick red.

Habitat

Lives in shallow water, usually in bays, less common around Sandy Hook than channeled whelk; dead shells are frequently found on Sandy Hook's ocean beaches after storms.

Edibility

Fair.



Knobbed Whelk

Atlantic Oyster Drill

Family: Muricidae

Urosalpinx cinerea

Description

Size: 3/4" long.

Characteristics: Spindle-shaped shell with 9-12 rounded ridges crossed by shallow, narrow spiral lines; shell opening has white teeth on thin outer lip; so named because it can drill through oyster shells and devour flesh inside; particularly destructive to young oysters.

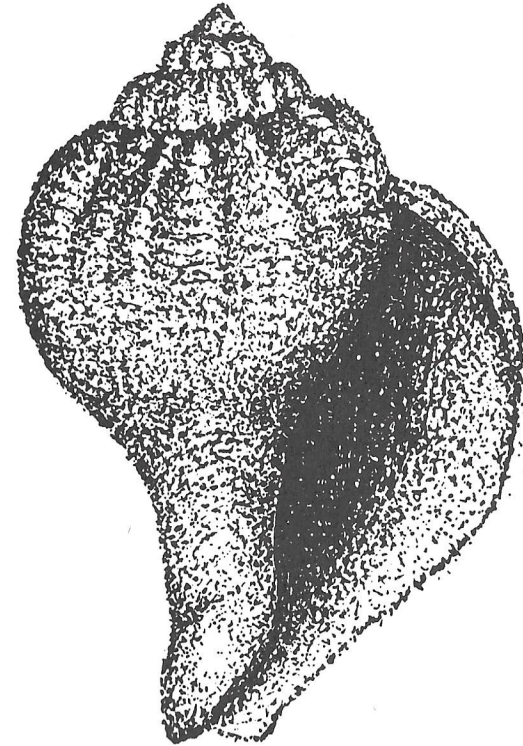
Color: Outer shell is bluish gray, white or orange, occasionally with darker bands of color; shell opening is brown, operculum is amber colored.

Habitat

Found on mud flats and all along the intertidal zone of Sandy Hook's bay region.

Edibility

Inedible.



Atlantic Oyster Drill

Thick-Lipped Oyster Drill

Family: Muricidae

Eupleura caudata

Description

Size: 3/4" long

Characteristics: Spindle shaped, strong surface sculpture in the form of axial ribs and opposite varices. Approximately 5 whorls ending in the strongly beaded outer lip. Siphonal (or anterior) canal constricted to nearly tubular. Generally more angular in appearance than *Urosalpinx cinerea*.

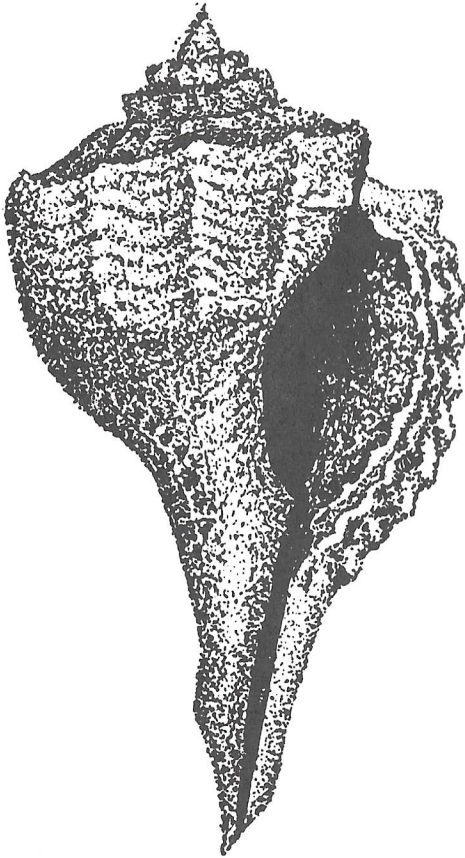
Color: Whitish grey to bluish purple.

Habitat

Found on mud flats and along the intertidal area of the bay. Slightly less common than *U. cinerea* but just as destructive to oyster beds.

Edibility

Inedible



Thick Lipped Drill

Eastern Mud Nassa (Mud Basket Shell)

Family: Nassariidae

Ilyanassa obsoletus

Description

Size: 1/4 - 1/2" high, up to 1".

Characteristics: Blunt-tipped shell with approximately six body spirals; Lattice-like surface; smooth-edged operculum.

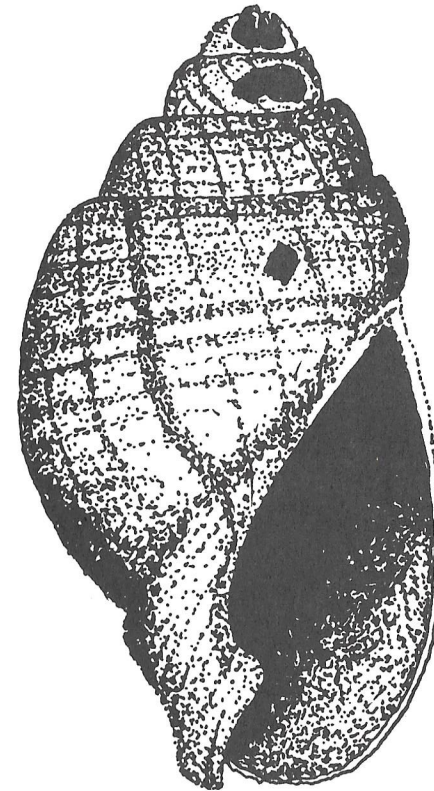
Color: Bluish band on the foot opening.

Habitat

Lives in Sandy Hook's bay region on mud flats exposed at low tide or in shallow water areas where algae grows on the bottom.

Edibility

Inedible



Eastern Mud Nassa

Three-Lined Basket Shell

Family: Nassariidae

Nassarius trivittatus

Description

Size: 3/4" high

Characteristics: Latticed surface with a deep suture; six or seven spirals; thin outer lip; the rough operculum has one shallowly-serrated edge.

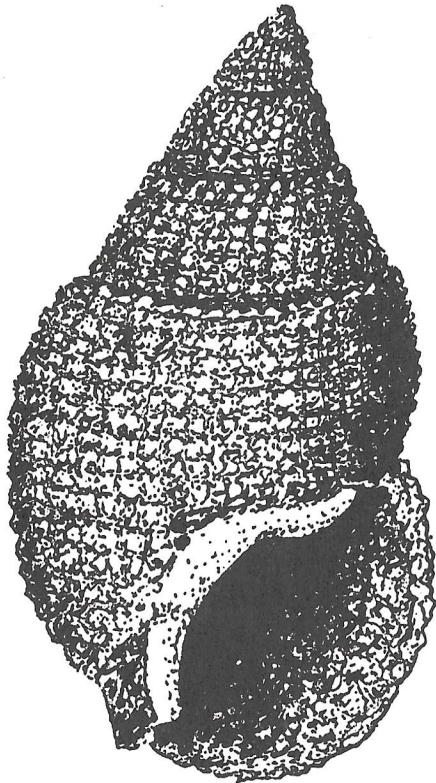
Color: Light green or yellowish-white.

Habitat

Commonly found on intertidal mud flats and shallow water areas of Sandy Hook Bay,

Edibility

Inedible



Three Lined Basket Shell

Common Moon Snail (Hero Moon Snail)

Family: Naticidae

Lunatia heros

Description

Size: Up to 4½" high, 3½" diameter.

Characteristics: Thin, globular shell and deep, open umbilicus distinguishes this snail from the Atlantic Moon Snail; the body whorl has a small, somewhat glossy spire; prey on oysters and clams.

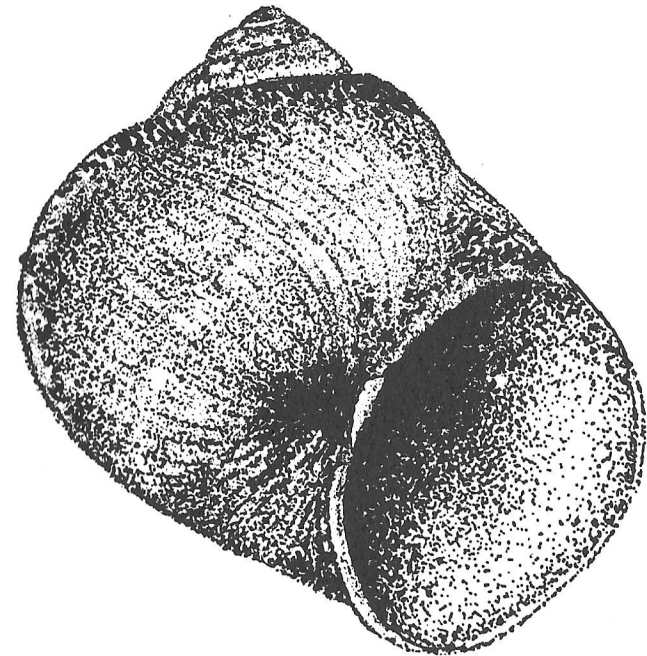
Color: Ashen-brown, occasionally with bluish spots; foot opening usually has brownish spots.

Habitat

Found in intertidal mud flats, around salt marsh banks and near algae-covered bottoms; can be dug up alive on sandy beaches at low tide by uncovering the small hillocks they throw up while plowing through the sand.

Edibility

Fair.



Common Moon Snail

Atlantic Moon Snail (Shark Eye)

Family: Naticidae

Polinices duplicatus

Description

Size: 1-3" long.

Characteristics: Solid, rounded, glossy shell; a dark callus lobe hides the umbilicus (a deep hollow at the base of the body whorl); carnivorous, they feed primarily on clams by drilling a hole through the clam shell with their rasping tongue and eating the flesh inside.

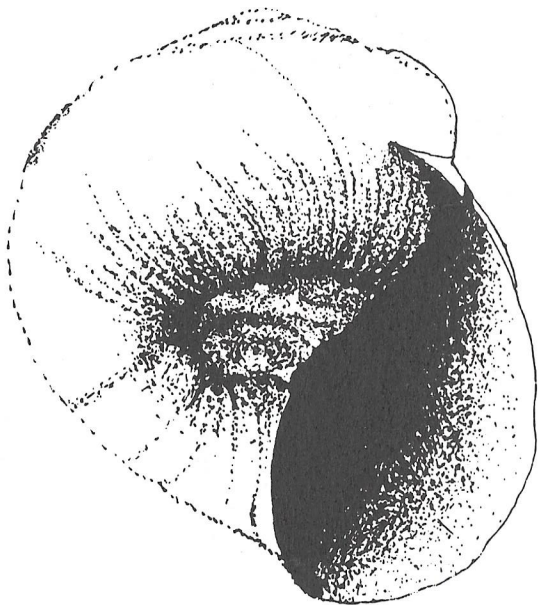
Color: Creamy gray, bluish tan, or slate gray; callus lobe is purplish brown; umbilicus is yellow-brown.

Habitat

Commonly found living among algae-covered rocks, on sand, or intertidal mud flats in Sandy Hook Bay.

Edibility

Fair.



Atlantic Moon Snail

Common Jingle Shell

Family: Anomiidae

Anomia simplex

Description

Size: 2" long

Characteristics: Glossy thin shell; the upper shell varies in shape and looks inflated, the lower is flat, has a large hole near the hinge and is stronger than the upper shell.

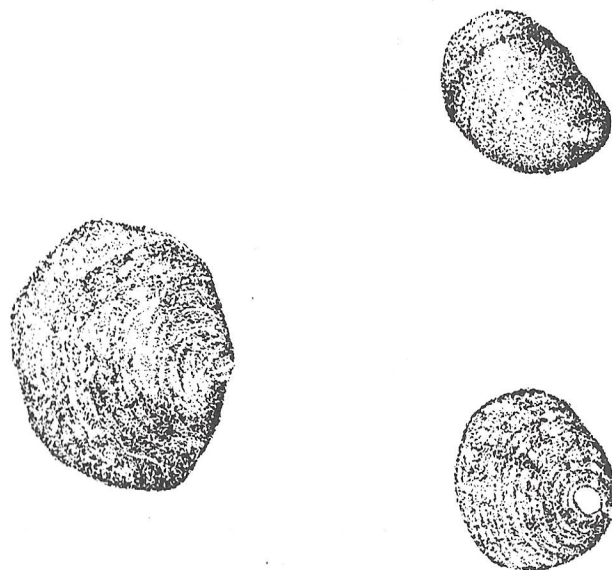
Color: Lemon yellow, brownish or pale buff.

Habitat

Lives on rocks, oysters or other shells attached by threads (byssus) that extend through the hole in the lower valve; common in protected bay areas such as Spermaceti and Horseshoe Coves; found on bay and ocean sides of Sandy Hook, where their shells litter the beaches. These shells are used to make mobiles which "jingle" as the wind blows.

Edibility

Poor.



Jingle Shell

Blood Ark

Family: Arcidae

Anadara ovalis

Description

Size: 2" long.

Characteristics: Round, oval shell with 35 radiating ribs.

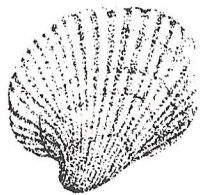
Color: Blood is red (not watery blue as in most bivalves); the shell is white, but the bottom half may be covered with a skin-like greenish-brown covering (periostracum).

Habitat

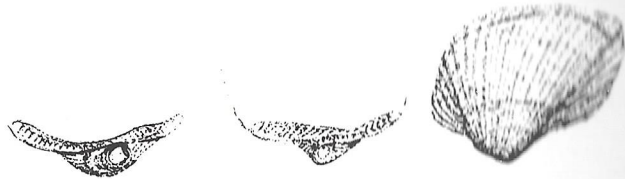
Found in the shallow, ocean-front subtidal zone; commonly found on Sandy Hook's ocean side, sometimes on the bay side, usually found washed up on the beach after a storm.

Edibility

Poor.



Blood Ark



Transverse Ark

Transverse Ark

Family: Arcidae

Anadara transversa

Description

Size: 1" long, 3/4" high.

Characteristics: Trapezoidal-shaped shell has 12 ribs radiating outward; the left valve overlaps the right.

Color: White, with a grayish-brown skin-like outer covering.

Habitat

Commonly found in the muddy areas just below the water line; generally on Sandy Hook's bay side, but a few may be found on the ocean side.

Edibility

Poor.

Chestnut Astarte (Smooth Astarte)

Family: Astartidae

Astarte castanea

Description

Size: 1" long, 1" wide.

Characteristics: Smooth, thick, angular shell; strong hinge; knobs at the apex are notched or have finely scalloped edges.

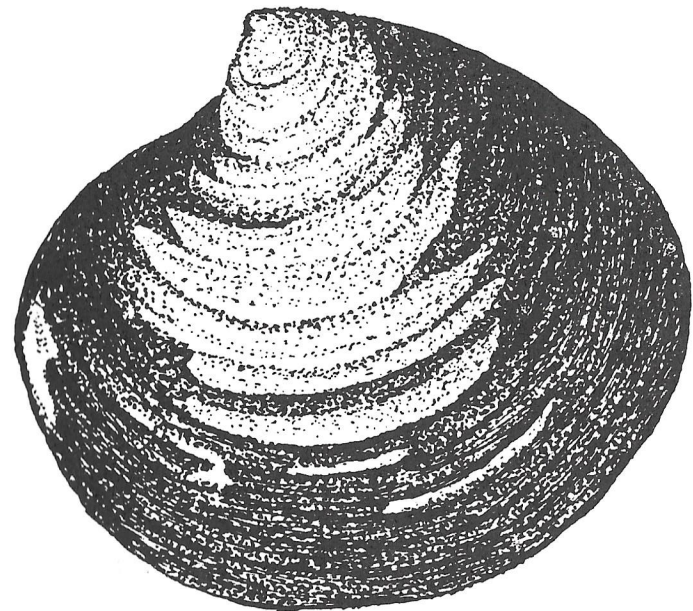
Color: Whitish shell with a black or chestnut brown outer covering.

Habitat

Common on ocean beaches, but some wash up on Sandy Hook's bay side.

Edibility

Poor.



Chestnut Astarte

Common Slipper Shell

Family Calyptraea

Crepidula fornicata

Description

Size: Up to 2" long.

Characteristics: Shell has a wavy, irregular edge with a smooth or lumpy surface, depending where it attaches itself; slipper shells growing in top of each other are convex, those growing inside dead shell are concave.

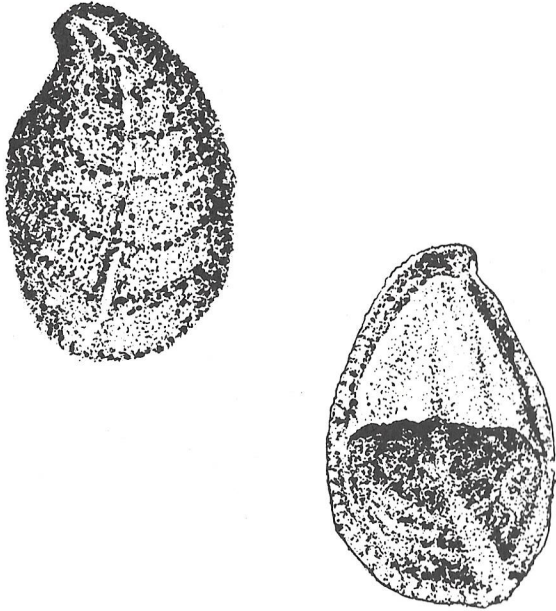
Color: Off-white or beige, with delicate, wavy pinkish-brown lines spreading out from the tip.

Habitat

Often grow attached to one another in little chains, can be found attached to the undersides of horseshoe crabs; found in shallow water on the ocean and bay sides of Sandy Hook; numerous on beaches after storms.

Edibility

Good.



Common Slipper Shell

Eastern White Slipper Shell

Family: Calyptraea

Crepidula plana

Description

Size: 1" long

Characteristics: They are born male and change into female as they mature; the shell has fine growth lines.

Color: White shell, tan skin-like outer covering.

Habitat

Anchors itself inside old moon shells or on other dead shells; sometimes they attach to each other; not as common at Sandy Hook as the common slipper shell.

Edibility

Poor.



Eastern White Slipper

Dwarf Surf Clam

Family: Mesodesmatidae

Mulinia lateralis

Description

Size: 3/4" long, 1/2" high.

Characteristics: Swollen, triangular shape with distinct, yet rounded posterior ridge; juveniles look less swollen than adults.

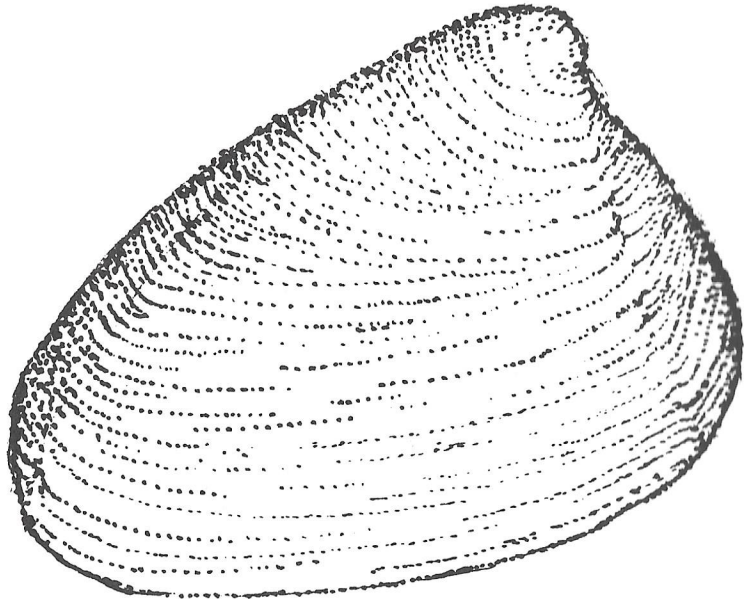
Color: Grayish-white with light tan outer covering.

Habitat

Found in Sandy Hook's quiet bay waters; found on ocean beaches after storms or high tides.

Edibility

Good.



Dwarf Surf Clam

Atlantic Surf Clam

Family: Mesodesmatidae

Spisula solidissima

Description

Size: 6-9" long, 4 1/2" high.

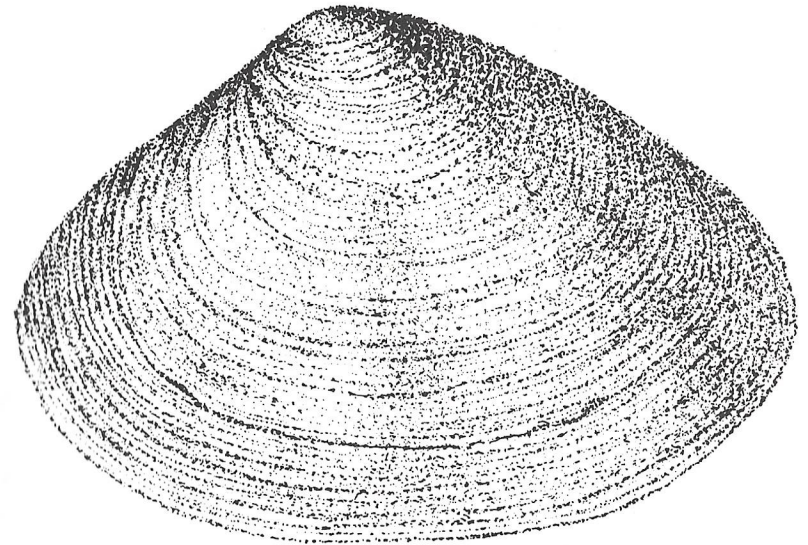
Characteristics: Older, more mature shells are heavy, thick and triangular with evenly rounded edges; the fragile, U-shaped cardinal tooth is usually broken when the two valves are forced apart; long lateral teeth along the edges of the shell have deeply scored sides with sharp ridges.

Habitat

Usually found in dense beds in shallow water along the ocean side of Sandy Hook.

Edibility

Excellent.



Atlantic Surf Clam

Soft Clam (Steamer, Long-Neck Clam)

Family: **Myacidae**

Mya arenaria

Description

Size: Up to 4" long, 1¼" high.

Characteristics: Chalky shell is thin, wrinkled and elliptical, covered with flakey gray outer covering; left valve has long, spoon-shaped structure (chondrophore) to receive the internal ligament; right valve has corresponding groove; no teeth; feed through long siphons (tongues) which can spurt water when you walk near them on beach.

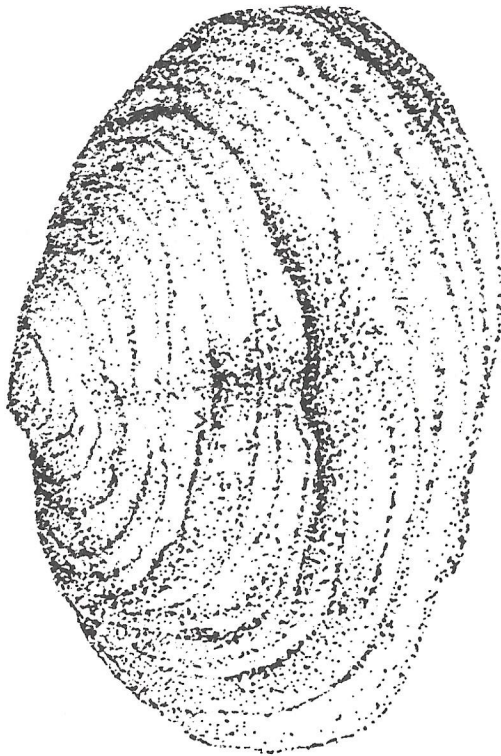
Color: Chalky gray.

Habitat

Found in deep burrows in mud, especially in bay areas; there are many clam beds in the mud flats of Sandy Hook Bay, but harvesting restrictions should be checked with local authorities.

Edibility

Excellent.



Soft Clam

Ribbed Mussel

Family: **Mytilidae**

Modiolus demissus

Description

Size: 3-4½" long.

Characteristics: Numerous radial ridges on the shell divide near the lower margin; skin-like outer covering has a thin, varnished look; byssal threads at the mid-section anchor the mussel to any hard surface.

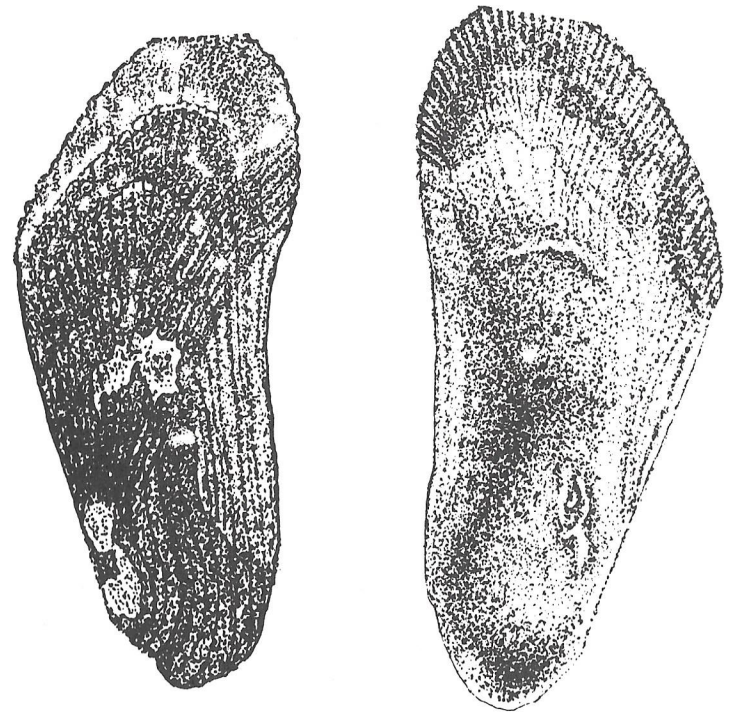
Color: Brown when exposed to air, greenish-yellow when submerged.

Habitat

Found in salt marshes with their lower half buried in muddy or peat bottoms; found growing among submerged rocks in Sandy Hook's bay.

Edibility

Inedible.



Ribbed Mussel

Blue Mussel

Family: Mytilidae

Mytilus edulis

Description

Size: Up to 3" long, 1" high.

Characteristics: Smooth, elongated, triangular shell with pointed beaks (umbo) opposite the hinge; four small teeth near the umbo; strong, string-like threads (byssus) extend from middle part of the shell and anchor the mussel to hard surfaces or other mussels.

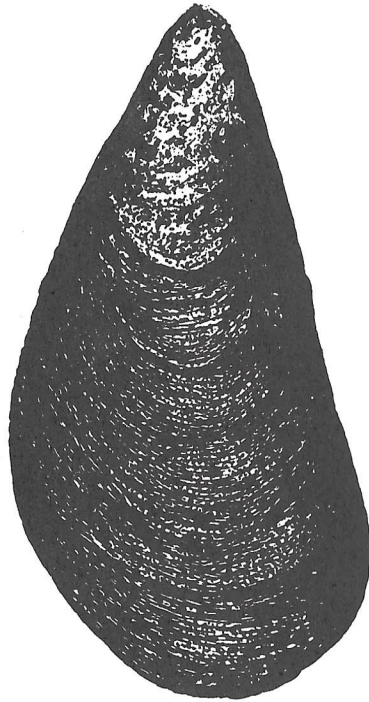
Color: Violet-blue, with a shiny, bluish-black outer covering.

Habitat

Found attached to any hard surface or clumped together in and around Sandy Hook's bay and ocean; dead shells usually wash onto the beach after storms.

Edibility

Good — excellent.



Blue Mussel

Eastern Oyster

Family: Ostreidae

Crassostrea virginica

Description

Size: 6" long; older specimens may be 10" long with a shell 1" thick.

Characteristics: Rough, elongated shell; may vary depending on the substrate it grows on; frequently overgrown with seaweed or covered with other molluscs.

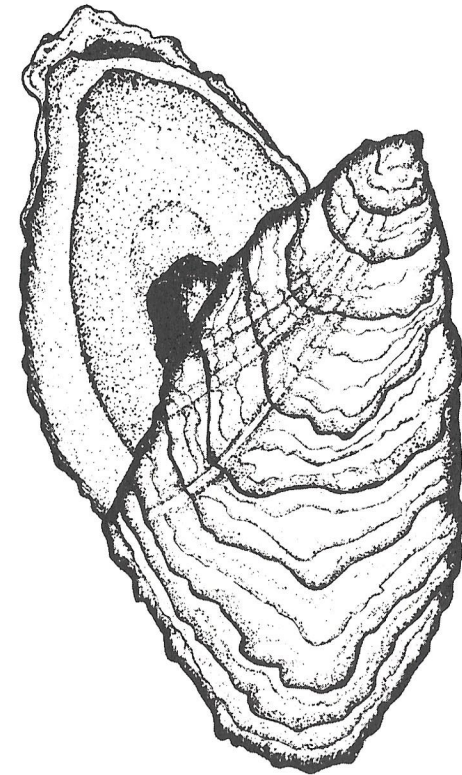
Color: Outside shell is dirty white; inside is white with purple muscle scars and a purple stain along the shell edge.

Habitat

Lives in shallow water beds along the bay area; their empty shells are frequently washed up on bay and ocean beaches after storms.

Edibility

Excellent.



Eastern Oyster

Bay Scallop

Family: Pectinidae
Aequipecten irradians

Description
Size: 2-3" across.

Characteristics: Slightly inflated shell has 17 to 19 ribs emanating from the base in a fan-like configuration.

Color: Pale brown or gray; some have light reddish tinge.

Habitat
Found in the inshore waters of the bay and ocean; free swimmers; some adults may permanently cement one valve to a hard object.

Edibility
Excellent; much more tender than the sea scallop.

Sea Scallop

Family: Pectinidae
Placopecten magellanicus

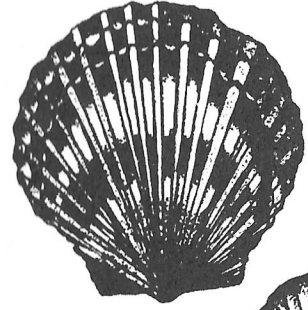
Description
Size: Up to 8" across.

Characteristics: This almost circular, slightly inflated, smooth shell has radial lines emanating outward.

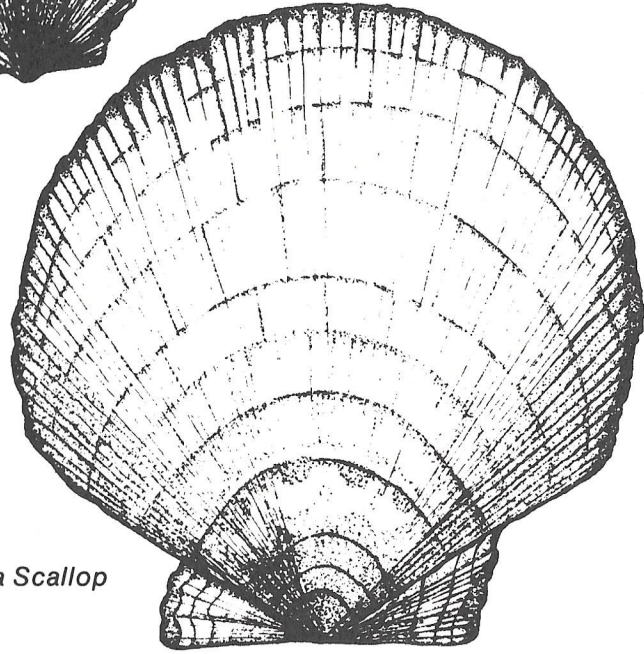
Color: Shell exterior is white; interior is glossy white with a prominent muscle scar.

Habitat
Inhabit deeper ocean waters near Sandy Hook, but shell fragments are found on beaches after a storm.

Edibility
Excellent.



Bay Scallop



Sea Scallop

False Angel Wing

Family: Petricolidae

Petricola pholadiformis

Description

Size: 1¼" long, ¾" high.

Characteristics: Medium thick, elongated shell has low ridges radiating from its tip; on one end these ridges are shorter, more elevated and have strong, tooth-like scales; the glossy interior corresponds to its external sculpture.

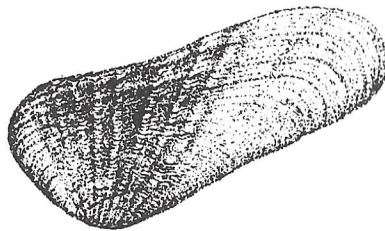
Color: Chalky white.

Habitat

Bore into peat, clay and, occasionally, water-logged wood near salt marshes; more common on Sandy Hook's bay side.

Edibility

Poor.



False Angel Wing

Common Razor Clam

Family: Solenidae

Ensis directus

Description

Size: 6" long; 1¼" wide.

Characteristics: Curved shell with sharply squared, gaping ends; the single, narrow marginal tooth in the left valve fits between the two teeth in the right valve; each valve has a long, posterior tooth.

Color: Shell has elongated or triangular brown or purplish spots and is covered by a bright, yellow-green skin-like covering.

Habitat

Prefers to live in sandy bottoms in shallow water within the subtidal zone of the ocean and Sandy Hook Bay.

Edibility

Excellent.

**Quahog (Hard Clam;
Chowders; Littleneck Clam;
Cherrystone Clam)**

Family: Veneridae

Mercenaria mercenaria

Description

Size: Up to 4" long, 3" high.

Characteristics: This heavy, thick heart-shaped shell looks swollen; marked by the buildup of many thin, concentric plates or scales (lamellae) near the umbo; the Lenni Lenape Indians traded these shell known as "wampum" and today they are also used to make jewelry pieces.

Color: Grayish-white or ash-colored with a deep purple blotch on the inside of the shell.

Habitat

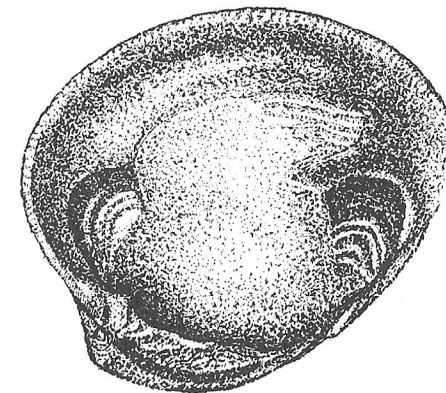
Burrow into the mud or sandy bottoms of the bay; found in densely populated beds in the inshore waters of the ocean; can live undisturbed for 20 to 25 years.

Edibility

Excellent, especially in making chowders.



Razor Clam



Quahog