

# australasian nudibranch NEWS

No.5 January 1999



*Pteraeolida ianthina* (Angas 1864).

This species can be found throughout the tropical Indo-Pacific, usually in shallow water (2-10m) feeding on hydroids and possibly alcyonaneans.

The colour ranges from creamy-white, (juveniles are creamy-white until they build up a store of zooanthellae) mottled brown, brownish-purple to blue. Some reference books and web sites have the white specimens as *Flabellina* sp.

Blue Dragons as they are commonly called are long and slender reaching 150mm, although 50-80mm is more common. The long oral tentacles always have two purple bands.

The cerata are grouped in up to 18 hand like clusters along the back and can not be autotomized.

Dr Richard Willan has observed this species displaying antagonistic behaviour between adults.

## References

*Nudibranchs of Australasia* – Willan and Coleman 1984.

Dr Bill Rudman – pers comm.

R.C.Willan. *Field Observations on Feeding and Antagonistic Behaviour by Pteraeolida ianthina* (Nudibranchia: Aeolidoidea). *The Veliger* 32(2):228-232 (April 3, 1989).



## Editors Notes

This issue contains a review of the dive sites of Port Stephens, a look at The Australian Museum's– Sea Slug Forum, two book reviews and more.

Bill Rudman has set up a page on the Sea Slug Forum to host all the issues of anNEWS. Steve Long, Mike Miller and Miquel Pontes also host back issues of anNEWS on their sites. Bob Bolland has references to anNEWS on his Okinawa Slug Site. If you haven't been to any of these sites, do it now, they contain a wealth of knowledge.

As always thanks to everyone who helps out. Your requests, articles or interesting snippets are always appreciated.

Subscriptions are now due for the 1999 Opisthobranch Newsletter. Contact [Steve Long](#) for details.

## Readers Requests

*Can anyone assist with the following requests?*

In the November edition you kindly printed various amendments to publications and I have a couple of queries:

In Debelius's book, p 139, shouldn't it be image b that is *Philineopsis cyanea*? p 146c - *Stylocheilus citrina* - shouldn't this be image 147a as '*citrina*' means lemon? p 284a - can this really also be *Marionia viridescens*, the same as p 282b?

In Wells & Bryce's, "Sea Slugs of Western Australia" have the names for images 182 and 183 been reversed. Should it be 182 = *D. nigra* (black) and 183 = *D. fumata* (smokey)?

[Lindsay Warren](mailto:Lindsay.Warren@compuserve.com) 100014.2112@compuserve.com

Are you familiar with this Nudi? It was captured on film last weekend at Cabbage Tree Island off Port Stephens in 15m over a sand bottom. I didn't observe any feeding, but he/she was in a major hurry to go somewhere! I saw this species briefly last year, but then they disappeared over the winter months. The body appears as an intense green with very vivid orange (almost dayglo!) patches.

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*Ceratosoma amoena* is common at most of the Port Stephens dive sites. It displays a wide variation from pale to bright pinks and yellows.



*Hopkinsia* sp is regularly found on the bryozoan in the deeper water at Halifax Park.

A small *Tambja* found regularly at Fly Point. Several *Tambja* species have been found at Port Stephens.



## Locations

Throughout the year different good nudibranch site will be reviewed. Send a review of your favourite site.

### Port Stephens:

Port Stephens (32° 43'S 152° 09'E) is several hours north of Sydney & 48 kilometres from Newcastle on Australia's East Coast (see map page 4). The Bay, as the locals call it, is twenty-three square kilometres of mostly calm protected waterways. It offers a wonderful area to observe & photograph nudibranchs. The best time to dive inside the bay is on the high or low tides as a strong tidal flow occurs. Low tide dives tend to have poorer visibility. Night diving is popular and rewarding.

Nudibranchs can always be seen at all sites, with summer being the best time for species numbers. Many different species arrive with the warm waters from the tropical north. This gives Port Stephens a good mix of tropical and temperate water species.

Port Stephens can be dived all year, winter water temperatures can be down around 15°. Summer temperatures are much more comfortable.

### Sites:

**The Co-op:** A silt bottom with acres of soft coral. Most divers follow the old sewer pipe out to a depth of 18m & then angle back towards shore through the forests of soft coral. Sponge gardens are dotted along the pipe. This area is also good for allied cowries. Due to its position there is rarely good visibility. Do not let that put you off, the Co-op can produce some interesting discoveries. Many nudibranchs and side gilled slugs not seen elsewhere are encountered eg. *Plocamopherus tilesi*, *Janolus* sp and *Dermatobranchus* sp.

**Red Patch:** A shallow boat dive further into the bay. *Marionia* sp is common here.

**The Fly Point - Halifax Park Aquatic Reserve:** Declared in January 1983. This reserve lies between Fly Point and Nelson Head. It extends from the mean high water mark to 500m offshore. A small area between the two jetties is not included in the Protected Area.

**Fly Point:** Slopes gently to about 8m where a ledge marks the beginning of an area covering about half a hectare of sponges, soft corals etc. A depth of 24m can be reached at the edge of the dive area. Many species of nudibranchs can be seen here throughout the year including *Chromodoris splendida*, *Ceratosoma amoena*, *Ceratosoma brevicaudatum* and *Hyselodoris bennetti*.

**Little Beach:** Lies between Fly Point & Nelson Head & can be a good shallow dive on its own or you can enter at Fly Point and drift around the point & exit at Little Beach. Some interesting finds have been made doing this dive. *Armina cygnea* has been recorded feeding on soft coral here.

**Halifax Park:** This site is under Nelson Head and is the deepest of the Bay dives reaching 27m+ on some high tides. Halifax lacks much interesting growth until you reach 15m. Entry & exit over the rocks can be tricky on windy days. *Hopkinsia* sp can be seen here.

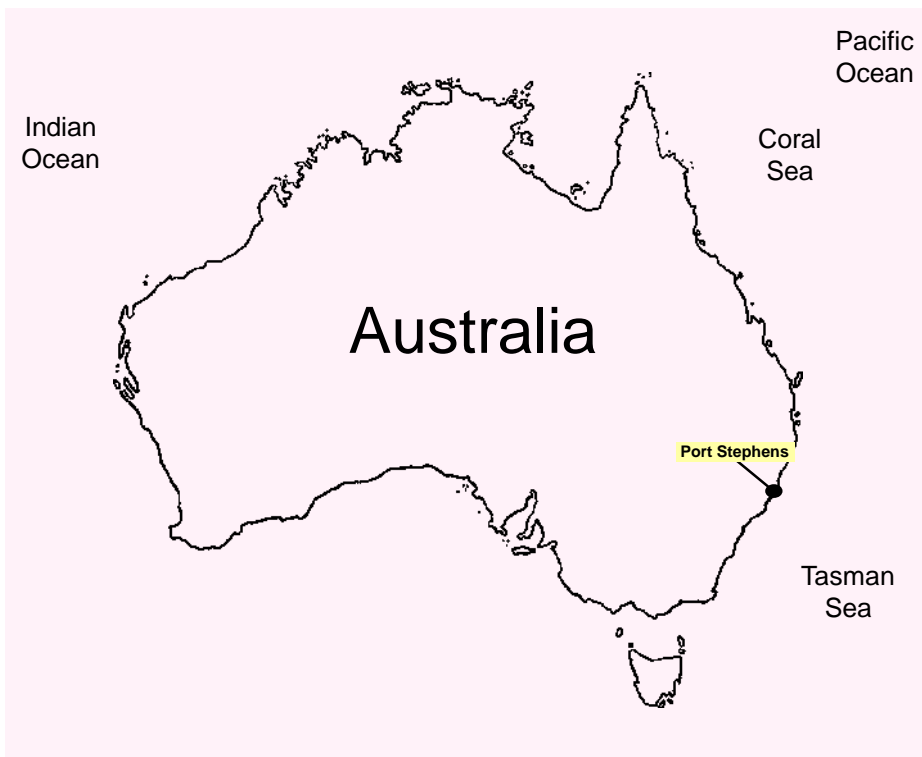
Port Stephens also offers several interesting island dive sites including Little, Broughton, Boondelah & Cabbage Tree Islands. The islands are all boat dives & can be arranged through any of the local dive shops. Species not regularly seen in the bay are found around the islands.

Several well equipped dive shops service the local and visiting divers. The area is a major tourist and residential centre offering a full range of services and facilities. Diving outside holiday periods is highly recommended as the place overflows during major holidays.

My first dive was in 1981 at Fly Point and my interest in nudibranchs was fostered by seeing so many so often. The area turns up a good mix of familiar and unfamiliar species. *Thorunna speciosus* Rudman 1990 was discovered at Halifax Park. The Australian Museum's – Sea Slug Forum features many species sighted at Port Stephens.

A [species list](#) for Port Stephens is being compiled. Any additions are welcome.





## Web Sites

### [The Australian Museum's Sea Slug Forum](#)

Bill Rudman commenced this site in early 1998. Like most researchers Bill spends a lot of time answering requests for identifications, mostly on a one to one basis. The Sea Slug Forum allows Bill to share the information more broadly.

The site has exceeded expectations, receiving four hundred visitors per day. Even with Bill having major heart surgery late in 1998, the Sea Slug Forum continues to expand rapidly.

There are several areas on the site

#### **Review New Messages**

Requests are posted in a review section, where the viewer can scroll through the latest postings. Each response usually includes a high quality image of the beast, a description and the original request for information along with Bill's reply. Older postings are archived for easy access.

#### **Species List**

A full list of all the opisthobranchs to be found at this site

#### **Participants List**

A useful list of those participating on the site. Includes amateurs and professionals from all round the world.

#### **Good Localities**

This section has been set up so participants can share information about their favorite nudibranch dive sites.

#### **General Topics**

Topics of general interest, not always nudibranchs.

#### **Book Reviews**

Participants send in reviews of nudibranch books, papers etc.

#### **Websites**

Links to other sites.

#### **Search the Forum**

A search tool making the site easier and faster to use.

The recent discussion on Dorid/Phyllidia mimicry is a good example of the value of this site. I certainly will be taking a lot more notice and going back through my slides and having another look.

## Feedback

Liked the "Noodle-branks"; I usually cop "Mobile licorice all sorts" or "Twisty wrappers" (*Notodoris gardineri*) from fellow Marine Park Rangers. *Jim Cruise Australia*

The article on spirals reminded me of a nice spiral I photographed some time ago, it was almost perfect, a white spiral over a dark leaf of an algae. *Miquel Pontes Garcia Spain*

Most impressed with your newsletter. *Bill Rudman Australia*

Thanks for the latest issue of anNEWS – another great effort! I've placed coloured copies of Vol. 1,2,3 & 4 on notice boards of several dive stores in the area now. Interest has been impressive! *Bill Chambers Australia*

Thanks for your latest edition - can't wait till we have a colour printer. Next year, I hope to contribute some info from Moreton Bay Marine Park. Will stay in touch.

*Sallyann Gudge Australia*

Diane and I are primarily interested in underwater photography and the marine environment in general. Any information to help us better understand what we find and photograph is always appreciated.

*Ross and Diane Armstrong New Zealand*

We like the layout of your newsletter. Normally PDF files with a complex layout and many illustrations are quite large (used to think that PDF is not a suitable format for the internet due to filesizes), but yours has a very handy size.

*Gisela & Hans Rothauscher Germany*

Just downloaded the no.3 australasian nudibranch news – thanks for bringing it to my attention. Obviously it's a great source of information and very helpful to those of us with nudibranch galleries. Thanks for the hard work! I wanted to wait for no. 3 before e-mailing Dave Behrens about nudibranch #34 on my site – meanwhile he sent me one about the same subject. I noticed the update says the former *Hoplodoris nodulosa* on pg. 253 in the Debelius book is now *Hoplodoris* sp.

*Jeff Jefford USA*

# Book Review

## **Nudibranchs of the South Pacific (Also Indian Ocean) Vol 1 – Neville Coleman.**

ISBN 0 947 325 02 6

Neville published this useful little field guide in 1989 using images from his Australasian Marine Photographic Index (AMPI). This sixty four page guide contains over one hundred and seventy colour images, covering one hundred and sixty two species.

The guide gives a basic overview of nudibranchs and their life cycle. Each species description includes information of classification, with the scientific and common name, depth range, food, size and occurrence. There is a good mixture of common and undescribed species from around Australia and the South West Pacific and East Indian Oceans.

The guide is 15cm by 22.5cm making it compact enough to easily carry around. The price is fifteen dollars (Aust) plus postage.

I have copies available. [Email](#) for current price including postage



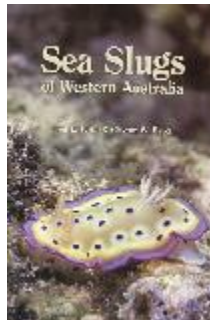
## **Sea Slugs of Western Australia Fred E. Wells & Clayton W. Bryce**

ISBN 0 7309 5523 0

This 184 page guide, first published in 1993 introduces 226 Opisthobranchs & includes bubble shells to nudibranchs. It covers the 12,000 km Australian West Coast. Many Indo-Pacific species are described & the authors have attempted to include species likely to be seen by interested observers. The guide includes an introduction to the life of sea slugs & information of each of the orders & families covered.

Although based primarily on fieldwork in Western Australia, this book is relevant to the whole Indo-Pacific region

Available from the Western Australian Museum, Francis Street, Perth, Western Australia. 6000 or the on-line book sellers listed.



## **Dr. Kerry Clark has died**

Dr. Kerry Bruce Clark, Professor of Biological Sciences at Florida Institute of Technology (Melbourne) and Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, died unexpectedly Sunday morning, 10 January 1999, of apparent heart failure.

A memorial service will be held at 2 pm on Saturday, 16 January, at the Florida Tech All-Faiths Center.

His family asks that in lieu of flowers contributions be made to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (6000 Executive Blvd, Suite 309, Rockville, MD 20852).

Kerry's research focused on the biology of opisthobranchs, including their physiology and ecological role in marine ecosystems. His publications, most notably on opisthobranch biodiversity, reproductive biology, systematics, and algal symbioses, found a wide variety of outlets. He was an equally active promoter of computerized tutorial techniques in biological sciences, particularly involving video imaging, 3-D modeling, and software development. "Metazoa," an award-winning CD-ROM exploration of invertebrate zoology, was his most significant brainchild.

Paula Mikkelsen mikkell@amnh.org

# Contacts

## Web Sites

### [Mike Miller's Slug Site](#)

A great reference site, a must see

### [Australian Museum's Sea Slug Forum](#)

Bill Rudman's site

### [The Okinawa Slug Site](#)

Another site to visit regularly

### [Sherif's Malaysian Slug Site](#)

A site for Malaysian nudibranchs

### [New Zealand Nudibranch Site](#)

Ian Skipworth's site

### [Steve Long's Opisthobranch Site](#)

Don't miss this page, great links.

### [Photos by Wayne Ellis](#)

Erwin Kohler provides space for my photos

### [Bernard Picton's Home Page](#)

Great nudibranch information section

### [Mediterranean Slug Site](#)

Erwin Kohler's Site

### [German Slug Site](#)

Wolfgang Seifarth's site

### [Bibliographia Nudibranchia](#)

Gary McDonald's nudibranch database site

## Books on the Web

### [Capricornica Publication](#)

Patty Jansen's natural history book site

### [Sea Challengers](#)

Dave & Diana Behren's marine books site

### [Mountain, Oceans & Travel Publications](#)

Barry Andrewartha & Belinda Barne's Sport Diving magazine site

### [Oceans Enterprises](#)

Peter Stone's diving related book site

### [Coral Sea Imagery](#)

Books, videos and CD,s relating to the marine environment in Townsville Qld Aust.

## anNEWS back issues

### [Australian Museum's Sea Slug Forum](#)

### [Mike Miller's Slug Site](#)

### [Steve Long's Opisthobranch Site](#)

### [M@re Nostrum](#)



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