

Occurrence of *Mirabilistrombus listeri* off Visakhapatnam coast

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The genus *Strombus* is a widely distributed within the Indo-Pacific region. *Mirabilistrombus listeri* commonly known as the Lister's conch is considered to be a true conch. A deep water species, it is distributed in the Northwest Indian Ocean and Andaman Sea. However, information on *M listeri* from the Indian coast is limited and it has been reported from Dhanuskodi, Gulf of Mannar, Tamil Nadu. The occurrence of this species along the Visakhapatnam coast is reported below.

Live specimens and shells of *Mirabilistrombus listeri* (Gray, 1852) were collected from the by-catch of the shrimp trawlers operating off Visakhapatnam (17° 42' N, 83° 15' E) in the Bay of Bengal. The live specimens were maintained in the marine hatchery in 1 tonne capacity fiberglass tanks containing seawater of 32-35 ‰ salinity. The morphometric measurements and the behavior of the conch was



Fig. 1. *Mirabilistrombus listeri*

recorded. The identification of the species was based on earlier description by Abbott (1960) and Subba Rao (2003).

The external surface was brown and whitish, overlaid with chestnut undulating axial stripes and speckled bands; periostracum was yellowish and very thin. Winged shell, 136.75 mm in shell length and 55.61 mm shell width was rather thin but strong, with a high pointed spire and a long and narrow

body whorl. Outer lip a little quadangularly expanded with the thickened edge almost parallel to the columella, posteriorly forms a round ended projection extending almost on the level of the suture above the penultimate whorl; anterior canal well developed, stromboid notch very deep and u-shaped. The head bears long and muscular eye peduncles; each peduncle giving rise to a fairly long tentacle a little below its distal end. Eyes are well developed and have colorful irises. Foot is narrow, very muscular bearing the operculum. Operculum is curved, almost crescent shaped, brown; serrated on one of the margins: proboscis is long and thin; penis open grooved and long; the conch moves or jumps with a leaping motion.

The shells are of great ornamental value and highly priced due to their rarity. Decorative items are made from the shells and are sold as curio items. The occurrence of shells and live specimens of *M. listeri* has been observed in the trawl by-catch landed in the Vishakhapatnam Fishing Harbor in recent months and therefore it may be assumed that a very small stock of *M. listeri* has probably established itself off Visakhapatnam. It is possible that the Visakhapatnam coast provides a natural habitat (sandy-mud substratum) for *M. listeri*, along with many other gastropod species occurring in the bed. This is a new distributional record for the species.