

IN SEARCH OF THE DUCK-BILL PIDDOCKS *Netastoma japonicum* and *N. rostratum*

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There are two lesser known, small piddock clams found boring in shale, sandstone and clay, from the low intertidal to depths exceeding 100 m. I have coined the common name, Duck-Bill Piddock, based on the etymology of their genus, *Netta*=duck and *stoma*=mouth. This differs from the explanation of the name in Coan et al. 2000, however, the spelling of an earlier name *Nettastomella* changed at a later date to *Netastoma*, changing the apparent meaning. These piddocks have a calcareous extension (termed a *siphonoplax*) originating from the periostracum at the posterior (siphon) end that may be equal or longer on the right valve. The extensions are duck-bill like in appearance. The shells have three distinct zones of sculpture, differing from the more common *Penitella* spp. and *Zirfaea pilsbryi* which have two zones of sculpture.

I was able to examine and photograph specimens of the **Unequal Duck-Bill Piddock**, *Netastoma japonicum* (Yokoyama, 1920), found in sandstone, near the zero tide mark, just south of the mouth of the Watun River, Haida Gwaii. Peter Hensen, an avid collector living in Haida Gwaii, collected several piddock species and sent them to experts. Bill Merilees fortunately found and preserved Hensen's collection, a story in itself, *A Love of Molluscs: Peter Henson's Story* by Bill Merilees. *The Dredgings*, Vol. 49 No. 5, 2009 pp. 3-4. Ian McTaggart Cowan also found this species in rock at Stanley Park, B.C. *N. japonicum*, ranges from the Gulf of Alaska south to Cape Flattery, WA. The shell is trigonal in shape and has three zones of sculpture. The thin calcareous siphonoplax is longer on the right valve and the calcareous portion of the callum is larger in the left valve (hence unequal).

The similar **Equal Duck-Bill Piddock**, *Netastoma rostratum* (Valenciennes, 1846) has been recorded from Barkley Sound, B.C. to southern Baja California, Mexico. It has a trigonal shell, equivalves and an **equal** calcareous siphonoplax. *N. rostratum* has been found at Ogden Point, Victoria by G.Holm and T.L. Smith and at South Pender Island (in clay) by Ian McTaggart Cowan. There are also records from California (type locality is Monterey) and Mexico.

References:

- Turner, R.D. 1962. *Nettastomella japonica* Yokoyama in North America and notes on the Pholadidae. *Occas. Papers Mollusks* 2(28):289-308, pls. 47-53.
- Coan, E.V., P.V. Scott and F.R. Bernard. 2000. *Bivalve seashells of Western North America. Marine Bivalve Mollusks from Arctic Alaska to Baja California.* Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Monographs Number 2. *Studies in Biodiversity* Number 2. Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, Santa Barbara, California: 764 pp.



Rick Harbo photo

Netastoma japonicum from Peter Hensen's collection. (#1563-#1564, numerous specimens from the zero tide mark, in sandstone, mouth of Wantun River (May 31 and June 30, 1961). The shell grows to 25 mm (1 in.).