

Marine Bivalve Shells of the British Isles

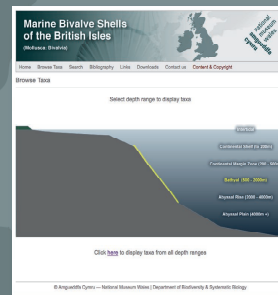
(Mollusca: Bivalvia)

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[Http://naturalhistory.museumwales.ac.uk/britishbivalves](http://naturalhistory.museumwales.ac.uk/britishbivalves)

Online identification aid to all bivalves found in waters around the British Isles, including those found in the EEZs of the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland and the Channel Islands.

- Free, open access website
- 350+ species covered with detailed descriptions, distribution maps and illustrations
- Juvenile and adult sizes of specimens illustrated
- Almost 3000 individual specimen images
- Bathymetric coverage from the intertidal to the abyss (5000m).
- Full Bibliography



Species	Author	Date
<i>Bathymera inaequivalva</i>	(E.A. Smith, 1885)	
<i>Bathymera pinnatifida</i>	(E.A. Smith, 1885)	
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Pseudamussium sulcatum, *Musculus costulatus* and *Acanthocardia echinata*

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An IYB2010 Contribution from Amgueddfa Cymru- National Museum Wales.

Marine Bivalve Shells of the British Isles is an open access E-taxonomy guide to all species of marine bivalves recorded from waters around the British Isles from the intertidal to the deep-sea. With financial support from the Department of Energy and Climate Change it is the first comprehensive identification aid to include all species currently recorded from the UK EEZ and likely to be found in adjacent waters. It considers all taxa included in the current British Checklist of Smith & Heppell and the UK Species Directory. Additional content covers: illustrations of growth series and varieties, distribution maps, habitat information and a bibliography.

Environmental monitoring requires a high degree of taxonomic capacity to identify the multitude of species encountered in benthic sampling programmes. Such studies were until recently largely confined to shelf depths. With the expansion of oil and gas exploration, environmental monitoring has moved into deeper and more northern waters. Here practitioners quickly encountered the inadequacies of current taxonomic guides, which are mostly limited in scope to intertidal and shelf waters. They also recognised the difficulty of identifying juveniles, which often form the bulk of the biomass. With a large collection of British bivalves, including many

benthic samples from the North Sea and the requisite expertise, Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales was able to respond to this demand. The project was led by Dr Graham Oliver from the Department of Biodiversity & Systematic Biology and supported by his colleagues Anna Holmes and James Turner. Ian Killeen, an environmental consultant with a long experience of identifying bivalves was also a partner. This team have experience of preparing taxonomic guides for bivalves including British Freshwater, Red Sea, Arabian Sea, Rodrigues and the Thyasiridae.

Only after the examination of voucher specimens were the 361 species that are included in this guide accepted. Although the shallow water fauna is well known there remain considerable gaps in our understanding of the deep-sea fauna and its relationship with subarctic faunas. Here we examined extensive collections derived from the deep sea surveys of: Scottish Marine Biological Association in the Rockall and Hebridean region; the National Oceanographic Institute, Southampton primarily from the Porcupine region; and the Atlantic Frontier Environmental Network initiative from West of Shetland. A companion guide to all deep-sea bivalves of the Atlantic is under discussion and seeking funding.

The chief advantage over a printed guide is the capacity to update information and to include new taxa as they are discovered. Adding and modifying the content is strongly encouraged as illustrated by recent addition of a species of *Chama* collected from flotsam on the coast of Dorset and the first record of *Coracuta* in the North Sea. New species of deep sea thyasirids await description before inclusion. The guide will expand with the planned inclusion of keys and pages on the discrimination of difficult groups.

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Clausinella fasciata

