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**NEW CALEDONIAN *CONUS MARMOREUS* COMPLEX**

David Touitou & Serge Rolland

October 25, 2005

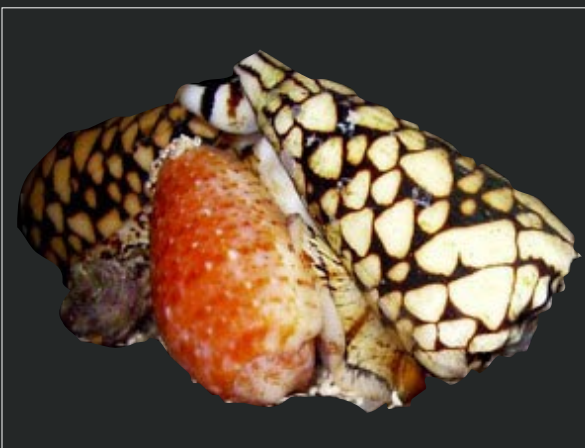


## New Caledonian *Conus marmoreus* Complex

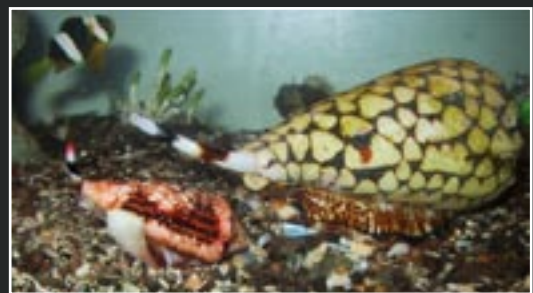
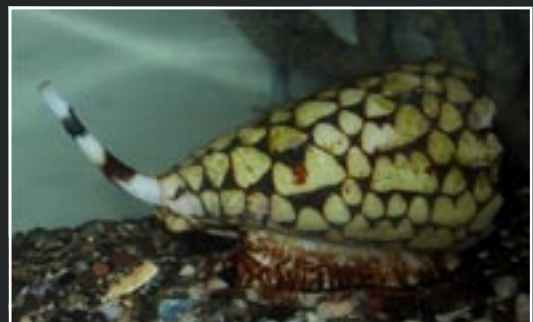
*David Touitou & Serge Rolland*

This is a rather small complex compared to other ones like *Conus magnificus-episcopatus*. But many of us get sometimes confused in front of some strange specimens. Even if I do not buy shells, I usually watch the shell dealers' websites to see what they offer to collectors and to dream on many beautiful specimens. Many times the data associated to the shell is not correct and especially with *Conus marmoreus* New Caledonian variations. That's why I hope that after reading this short article, you will have no more problem to identify any variation of this species.

*Conus marmoreus* is night and day mollusc hunter. It feeds on many gasteropods including Cone Shells. This shallow water species lives in grass fields or coral fragments areas. Big specimens can be found in sand pockets (even small ones among live corals) on the reef.



Two *Conus marmoreus* attacking a *Conus bullatus* (New Caledonia). Picture by Serge Rolland.



Here are some pictures from a live *Conus marmoreus* (in M. Rolland Aquarium). Aquarium shots by Touitou David & Rolland Serge.



### A. ICONOGRAPHY OF THE DIFFERENTS VARIATIONS FROM NEW CALEDONIA

1. *Conus marmoreus* "classic specimens" Linné, 1758.
2. *Conus marmoreus* "batard" Linné, 1758
3. *Conus marmoreus* f. *suffusus* Sowerby III, 1870
4. *Conus marmoreus* f. *pseudomarmoreus* Crosse, 187?
5. *Conus marmoreus* f. *suffusus* var. *noumeensis* Crosse, 1872
6. *Conus marmoreus* "orange variation" Linné, 1758
7. *Conus marmoreus* f. *crosseanus* Bernardi, 1861
8. *Conus marmoreus* f. *crosseanus* var. *lineata* Crosse, 1878

## B. DETAILED INFORMATIONS ABOUT THE DIFFERENT VARIATIONS FROM NEW CALEDONIA



Collected in the North-West



Collected in the North



### *Conus marmoreus* Linné, 1758 “classic specimens”

This is a classic species from the Pacific Ocean.

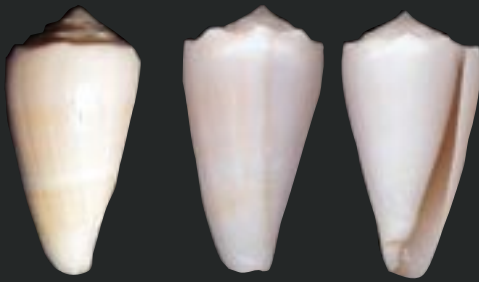
Like many other cone shells species, it may vary a lot. The pattern is black and has a lot of white triangles that usually are separated from each other by the black color of the pattern. The triangles, unlike in the *Conus magnificus-episcopatus* complex, are very similar between themselves by their shape and their size. They are rarely confluent. They may sometimes, like many other species, have partially unusual pattern and triangle colors like the blue color (like *Conus canonicus*). In the south we can find some “hybrids” between the usual variation and the *crossseanus* one.

### *Conus marmoreus* Linné, 1758 “batard”

This variation is endemic to the Bourail Region. The shells are smaller there now. They used to have normal size in the past but they are too often collected and cannot reach big sizes anymore...

These are “hybrids” between usual *Conus marmoreus* and *Conus marmoreus* f. *suffusus*. Some have just huge confluent white triangles and some have just few black marks on their pattern. Those are really beautiful specimens.





***Conus marmoreus f. suffusus* Sowerby III, 1870**

This variation is endemic to the Bourail Region. The shells are smaller there, like the “batard” ones. They are made of pure white color with pink or light yellow tint. Black spots, dots or lines are not present anymore.



***Conus marmoreus f. suffusus var. noumeensis* Crosse, 1872**

This form concern white specimens which were found in the south of the island. In fact they are just albinistic specimens of *Conus marmoreus* species.

Their size is then bigger than the *Conus marmoreus f. suffusus* specimens from Bourail as they are related to the classic *Conus marmoreus*.



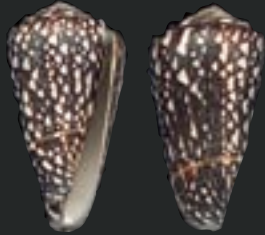
***Conus marmoreus f. crosseanus* Bernardi, 1861**

This variation is endemic from Pine Island.

The dark pattern has many axial dark lines, the white triangles are less visible and less numerous. It makes really dark specimens which contrast a lot with *Conus marmoreus f. suffusus*.

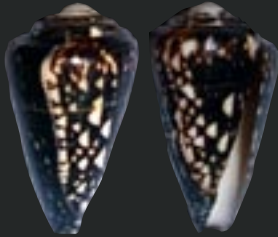
A yellow to blue tint can exist on some specimens though. The size correspond to usual *Conus marmoreus* species.





*Conus marmoreus* f. *crosseanus* var. *lineata* Crosse, 1878

This variation is endemic from Pine Island. It differs from the *Conus marmoreus* f. *crosseanus* by the presence of one to several spiral line crossing the pattern of the shell. They can be large or very thin. The spiral lines can be colored with white, light blue, light yellow or light yellow-orange. When several lines are present on a specimen, they may have different color.



*Conus marmoreus* "orange variation" Linné, 1758

This variation is endemic from Pine Island. This variation differs a lot from *Conus marmoreus* by it's pattern color which is orange instead of black. It is a very nice variation wich is very rare though.



*Conus marmoreus* f. *pseudomarmoreus* Crosse, 187?

This variation refers to uncrowned specimens.

Nothing really incredible. Just some anormal specimens of *Conus marmoreus* with smooth spire instead of the usual crowned one.



*Conus marmoreus* Linné, 1758 strange specimen

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