

Natural History Snippets

Brief reports by members based on their observations of nature
 Members are invited to submit their photographs and stories to muhudubella@gmail.com for publication

Freshwater Mussels - Families Unionidae & Corbiculidae



Galkadawela Tank, Habarana

I found my first freshwater mussels in 1978, at the edge of the Tabbowa Tank, Puttalam, where the family had paused on our way to Wilpattu. They were dead shells and seemed to be of two different species. Looking up Bulletins of the Fisheries Research Institute showed that there were two families of freshwater bivalves reported from Sri Lanka in four genera. Mine appeared to be *Lamellidens lamellatus* and *Parreysia corrugata*. In 2007 and 2009 single valves of the other species of *Lamellidens* described from Sri Lanka turned up in leftover builder's sand strewn on the ground at two bungalows we stayed in on SLNHS trips—at Pidurangala and Kaluamodera. They may have been from sand-bottomed rivers.

Live shells were found only in 2011, while having our evening bathe in the Galkadawela Tank, on another SLNHS excursion. Many *L. lamellatus* and just one *L. testudinarius*.



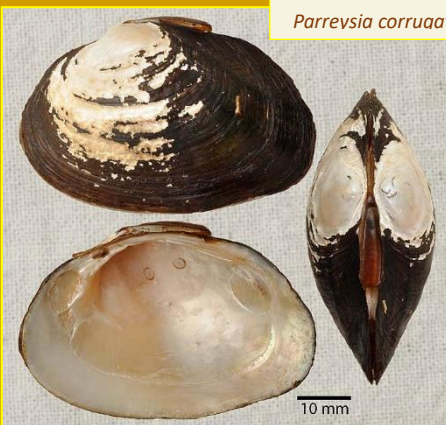
Lamellidens generosus (A. Gould 1847)
 Synonym: *Lamellidens consobrinus* (I. Lea, 1860)



Lamellidens marginalis Lamarck, 1819
 Synonym: *Lamellidens testudinarius* (Spengler, 1793)

Four species of freshwater bivalves in two families are now accepted from Sri Lanka. One very rare species seems to be known only from the type specimens. A fifth, brackish water species that also occurs in mangroves, is not described here. The two *Lamellidens* species have passed through a number of name changes over the years. They can be recognised by their characteristic shapes.

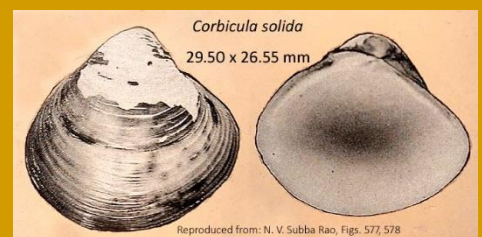
Parreysia corrugata has a more rounded shell with characteristic wrinkles over the umbo area—the swollen part near the hinge. These wrinkles are obscured in older shells (l/hand image) but clear in younger shells (r/hand image).



Parreysia corrugata (O.F. Müller, 1774)



These bivalves have all been collected from a number of freshwater tanks, mostly as dead shells washed ashore. The live ones were found buried vertically in mud with the posterior end exposed. The find locations include the following tanks: Nachchaduwa & Tissa Wewa (Anuradhapura), Galkadawela (Habarana), Tabbowa (Puttalam), Batalagoda (Kurunegala), Galpothumulle Wewa (Kahandamodera).



Corbicula solida
 29.50 x 26.55 mm

Reproduced from: N. V. Subba Rao, Figs. 577, 578

Corbicula solida Clessin, 1887 is known from a specimen in the British Museum Natural History. It is described together with many other Indian species of *Corbicula* by N.V. Subba Rao in his Handbook: Freshwater Molluscs of India. The image is taken from the book. It is endemic to the Island, with no detailed find records except that it is a freshwater inhabitant. Here is something to look out for.

Malik Fernando, 4.4.2023