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Gelatinous Masses Spawned by Some Naticids (Sand-Snails)

It is generally stated that members of the molluscan family Naticidae glue their egg capsules together with sand to form characteristic collar-like structures (Allan, 1959; Dakin, 1952; Lebour, 1937; Morton, 1958; Rippingale and McMichael, 1961), but at least two Australian species have been found to spawn their eggs dispersed in large gelatinous masses.

A single specimen of *Conuber conicum* (Lamarck, 1822) was placed in a two-gallon aquarium on 6 January 1962, and four weeks later it produced a gelatinous mass containing minute eggs which subsequently hatched into planktotrophic veligers.

In view of the unexpected nature of this naticid spawn and the many interests involved, three specimens of *C. conicum* were taken to the National Museum of Victoria in Melbourne where they were placed in a special tank under the supervision of the Curator of Molluscs, Miss J. Hope Macpherson: within a few days a gelatinous egg mass was spawned, confirming the original observation.

Such jelly masses are common objects on Australian seashores, but their origin has

baffled marine biologists, who have been unable to culture the larvae through to an identifiable stage. An illustration is given by Dakin (1952) who refers to them as 'Sausage-Blubbers'.

Investigations in progress with other species have so far revealed that *Conuber sordidum* (Swainson, 1821) spawns a gelatinous mass, but *Glossaulax aulacoglossa* (Pilsbry and Vanatta, 1908) a 'typical' sand collar.

A detailed account of these egg masses and their veligers is being prepared for publication.

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