

**Description of *Saginafus* *momus* sp. nov.,
a new large buccinoid species from Thailand (Gastropoda: Melongenidae)**

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Abstract: The genus *Saginafus* Wenz, 1943 currently contains one species from northern Australia. This paper presents a second species from the Andaman Sea. This new species differs from *Saginafus pricei* E.A. Smith, 1887 in shell morphology and geographical distribution, with *S. pricei* being restricted to the Timor Sea. The new species is periodically sold through the shell souvenir market. The shells sold at these markets originate from local fishermen operating in the shallow parts of the Andaman Sea. The name chosen for the new species is *Saginafus momus* sp. nov..

Introduction: This paper is the second result in a study on the family **Melongenidae** Gill, 1877, a small family included in the superfamily **Buccinoidea** (Bouchet & Recroi, 2005), encompassing roughly about 20-25 Recent species with a global, primarily tropical distribution. Members of this family commonly live in muddy and sandy bottoms, with some taxa predominantly inhabiting estuaries and bays.

The author first became aware of a potential new large melongenid species when he saw shells that looked rather similar to *S. pricei* on a commercial website. After examination of several shells, research into their origins was undertaken and the material was traced to the tourist markets in southeastern Thailand. The geographical distance from the known *Saginafus* species is rather large, but currents south of the Andaman Sea might be the historical connection between the two species now recognised in the genus. It is interesting to note that a large shell like the new species has hitherto been overlooked by taxonomic workers.

Abbreviations:

NCB: NCB Naturalis, Leiden, The Netherlands
AMD: Aart M. Dekkers, Purmerend, The Netherlands
SD: Sophie Descy, Jemeppe sur Sambre, Belgium
H: height
W: width measured at the shoulder

SYSTEMATICS:

Superfamily **BUCCINOIDEA** Gray, 1850
Family **MELONGENIDAE** 1871 (1854)
[= Cassidulidae Gray, 1854 (inv.) = Galeodidae Thiele, 1925 (inv.) = Volemidae Winckworth, 1945 = Heligmotomidae Adegoke, 1977]
Genus *Saginafus* Wenz, 1943
Type species: *Saginafus princei* [sic] = *Fusus pricei* E.A. Smith, 1887, by original destination.

Diagnosis of the genus: Large globose and generally solid shell with many raised spiral ribs. These are crossed by axial ribbing and growth lines on the body whorl. The shoulder has reduced knobs or spines. The postnuclear whorls are gradually becoming larger. The teleoconch has spiral ribs and axial sculpture on the earlier whorls. The aperture is large, ovate and about half the shell height. The growth pattern is determinate: ending with a reflected polished outer lip with crenulations.

Remarks: This genus has historically been attributed to Iredale (1931); however, he gave no description of the genus which makes his introduction of the generic name invalid under ICZN Art.13.1.1. (To be available, every new name published after 1930 must satisfy the provisions of Article 11 and must be accompanied by a description or definition that describes characteristics that are purported to differentiate the taxon). So, the genus must be attributed to Wenz, 1943 (fide Snyder et al, 2012).

The genus *Saginafusus* was usually assigned to **Fasciolaridae** (Wilson, 1994: 74-75), but was transferred to **Melongenidae** by Snyder et al. (2012: 76). Within the family **Melongenidae**, *Saginafusus* is morphologically closest to *Hemifusus* Swainson, 1840, which houses large to very large shells, but has a more northern Pacific distribution ranging from the Chinese Sea and Japan to Indonesia, while *Saginafusus* is restricted to the Timor Sea and Andaman Sea. Furthermore, *Saginafusus* morphologically differs from *Hemifusus* by the determinate outer lip and axial ribs that commence late in ontogeny. The genus was long thought to be monospecific.

Saginafusus momus sp. nov.

Type material: **Holotype:** NCB, RMNH.MOL.290811, Thailand, trawled, H 230 mm, W 122 mm; **Paratype 1:** NCB, RMNH.MOL.290812, Myanmar (Birma), trawled, with periostracum, H 245 mm, W 125 mm; **Paratype 2:** AMD, Thailand, trawled, H 215 mm, W 110 mm; **Paratype 3:** AMD, Thailand, trawled, H 213 mm, W 109.5 mm; **Paratype 4:** SD, Myanmar, H 228 mm, W 110 mm; **Paratype 5:** coll. H. Dekker (The Netherlands), nr 4034, Thailand, off Ranong, trawled, H 184 mm, W 88 mm; **Paratypes 6-10:** coll. D. Monsecour (Belgium), NE Sumatra, Dredged at ca 40m.

SW Thailand and NE Sumatra, mainly at 80-120 metres although also found at ca. 40 metres. The new species is dredged together with *Callistocypraea leucodon tenuidon* (Lorenz, 1999) and *Conus patamakanthini* Delsaerd, 1998 on muddy rock bottoms associated with some sponges and soft coral species with *Crassostrea* sp., which they probably feed upon.

Additional material studied: *S. pricei* (E.A. Smith, 1887), 4 specimens in the private collection of the author (AMD); Darwin, northern Australia, collected at low tide, H 184 W 83 mm; Brunswick Heads, New South Wales, trawled. H 149 mm W 72 mm; "Australia", no exact location, from 20-40 meter, H 156 mm W 74 mm; Rabaul, Papua New Guinea, dived, H 153 W 69.

On top of the material presented here, 13 more specimens from Phuket, Thailand are known to the author (www.conchology.be: nrs 265276-265288). These specimens were obtained from fishermen in Phuket. These 13 specimens are consistent to constant in shell character and range from 233 mm to 265 mm in length.

Type locality: Andaman Sea, southwestern Thailand.

Description: The shell is large: up to 270 mm. The nuclear whorls are unknown. The shell consists of about 7 postnuclear whorls with a distinct shoulder with acute knobs. First 3 postnuclear whorls lighter in colour than the rest of the teleoconch and with spiral lines crossed by axial lines, thereby rendering a cancellate effect; on the later teleoconch whorls the spiral ribs dominate. Last whorl rounded with raised spiral ribs, especially on the siphonal canal and the area just above it. The spiral ribs on the last whorl are more flattened towards the shoulder and remain flattened towards the suture. The axial sculpture consists of many weak growth lines and axial ribs, of which there are 9 - 11 on the last whorl. The sharp knobs or reduced spines on the shoulder are the most elevated part of the faint axial ribs and are more prominent on the earlier whorls. The early whorls gradually enlarge and are neatly wound, bearing spiral and axial ribs. The aperture measures half the shell height and is ovate with a sharp-edged shoulder. The outer lip's edge is slightly reflected, determinate and polished with crenulations. The columella is almost straight and smooth. The siphonal canal is broad and elongated. When observed dorsally the shell outline from the shoulder towards the sinus of the siphonal canal forms a straight line.

The shell colour is uniformly yellowish cream, also on the inside, becoming more whitish towards the end of the siphonal canal. The hairy periostracum is golden brown (paratype 1).

The operculum is large and thick, sealing most of the aperture.

The animal was not studied.

Distribution: Andaman Sea (Indian Ocean): from the southern part of western Thailand to NE Sumatra and Myanmar (based on a single record herein).

Habitat: On muddy sand at 10-20 metres. One record herein from 20-40 metres. The depth range is rather similar to *S. pricei*'s (Hilton 1972: 32 "taken in prawn trawl nets to 20 meters in Gulf of Papua").

Comparison and remarks: *Saginafusus momus* sp. nov. is uncommon with most examples rough and with many defects. The new species grows much larger than *S. pricei* which attains a height of about 160-230 mm. Furthermore, the latter has more rounded whorls with reduced, raised knobs on the rounded shoulder unlike the angulated shoulder with distinct knobs or short spines in *S. momus* sp. nov. . These species also differ in coloration, with *S. pricei* light brown whereas the new species is more yellowish cream.

Etymology: The name “momus” is used as a noun. The name “momus” derives from the similarly named bar/restaurant in Maastricht, the Netherlands, where my companion and I enjoyed meals and drinks on the sunny terrace during our stay in Maastricht. The historic building, situated at number 11 on the square (which has a special meaning related to Carnival) used to be the home of the Momus-society. The society was active in the fields of sports, charity and culture and among these the carnival feasts. The interior of the ‘Momus’-hall in the restaurant is beautifully decorated with sculptured imaginary animals and creatures related to the carnival feast, a yearly celebration before spring in the mostly Catholic south of the Netherlands with presumably non-religious roots before Ash Wednesday and with processions mocking events and political situations. The word “momus” is ancient Greek; in Greek mythology Momus is the son of Nyx. He is the personification of satire, mockery, censure and the God of writers and poets. The name ‘momus’ is also chosen for the new species mocking all taxonomists and workers on the large gastropods overlooking the species.

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Plate 1:

1-2: *Saginafusus momus* sp. nov.

Holotype NCB, RMNH.MOL.290811, Thailand, trawled, H 230 mm, W 122 mm.

3-5: *Saginafusus momus* sp. nov.

Paratype 1, NCB RMNH.MOL.290812, Myanmar (Birma), trawled, with periostracum, H 245 mm, W 125 mm

6-7: *Saginafusus pricei* (E.A. Smith, 1887)

Darwin, northern Australia, collected at low tide, H 184 W 83 mm

