

# Turbinidae

*Megastraea undosa* (Wood, 1828)

**Common Name:** Wavy Top Turban

**Distribution:** Found from just north of Morro Bay, San Luis Obispo County, California, becoming common south from the area of Point Conception, Santa Barbara County to Baja California Sur, Mexico.

**Habitat:** Rocky intertidal to at least 180 feet deep off-shore. Large shells are more frequent off-shore but may be found on beaches after a storm. In bays and lagoons the species is found in rocky areas and sand flats with eel grass.

**Size:** The basal diameter can reach 150 mm, but most large shells are 115-130 mm in diameter.



**Color:** Live shells have a thick brown periostracum (left). When cleaned they are white, but may have some additional colors towards the apex (center). Small to moderate shells can be quite colorful with yellow, cream and brown (right).

**Notes:** The species is known to consume over 30 genera of algae. *Megastraea undosa* is harvested commercially in Baja California, Mexico and in Southern California. Most large shells are 11 to 14 years old. Small to moderate size snails are more frequent in shallow protected water. They are distinguished from a close relative *M. rupicollina*, which have two prominent radial cords, whereas *M. undosa* has one prominent radial cord. For detailed biological information review the reference via the link below.

**References:** Tuskes, P.M., and A.M. Tuskes. 2023. Biology of the Wavy Top Turban *Megastraea undosa* (Wood, 1828) from Southern California, and the Baja California Peninsula (Turbinidae). *The Festivus* 55(1):40-56. <http://doi:10.54173/F55140>. Additional photographs: Berschauer & Clark. 2018. *Marine Shells of the California Province*.