

San Diego Shell Club

The Annual

WEST COAST SHELL SHOW

sponsored by

The San Diego Shell Club

Casa del Prado

1650 El Prado, Room 101, Balboa Park
San Diego, California 92101

The Show is open to the Public and admission is FREE!

Saturday, August 29, 2026, 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 30, 2026, 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

The San Diego Shell Club is pleased to announce that the West Coast Shell Show will be held on August 29th and 30th 2026. We anticipate a large number of exhibitors this year and hope that you will join us. Exhibit space is limited and will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis, meaning that registrants who submit completed registration forms will be given priority in the order they are received and will be assigned space accordingly. Consequently, we recommend completing and submitting the registration form attached as soon as possible. The deadline for submission of your registration form is July 25th. The room will be open to exhibitors and dealers at 12:00 p.m. on Friday, August 28th for set up. The event will be open to the public beginning Saturday morning at 9:00 a.m.

We are also expecting many visitors, so if you are not planning on exhibiting, we would encourage you to come, support our members that are exhibiting and volunteer some of your time assisting where needed. When you arrive just ask the Committee Chairperson, David Waller, how you can help. Some food and refreshments will be provided for the judges, dealers, exhibitors and volunteers by the Club. Burgers and sandwiches may be purchased from vendors in the park.

For any additional information, please contact David Waller at dwall@dbwipmg.com.

West Coast Shell Show Rules

The San Diego Shell Club has established uniform rules and clearly defined categories to encourage more exhibit entries, increase competition (particularly in the areas of shell collecting), and expand and enhance the overall quality and quantity of exhibits by giving all exhibitors an opportunity to compete at many different levels. We have also established a clear, systematic basis for judging and will continue our work in making the West Coast Shell Show a must-attend event for dealers and collectors alike.

Please read entire entry packet carefully!

I. GENERAL RULES

1. Entries are open to anyone who submits an exhibitor's registration form (see attached) by Friday, **July 25, 2026** on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no entry fee.
2. Set-up for exhibitors will begin at 12:00 p.m. on Friday, August 28, 2026 and on Saturday August 29, 2026 from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. **All exhibits that are in competition for trophies or ribbons must be in place by Friday, August 28, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.**
3. No exhibits, or portion of an exhibit, may be removed before 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 30, 2026 except for security reasons. **NO EXCEPTIONS**
4. **Judging will begin at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, August 28, 2026.** The exhibit hall will be closed during judging. Any exhibitor who directly approaches the judges or speaks to the judges during the judging risks having their exhibit disqualified.
5. The West Coast Shell Show is open to the public on Saturday and Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
6. Only exhibits entered for competition will be eligible for awards and trophies. However, non-competitive exhibits are also welcome. **All exhibits must be titled, and titles must be listed on your registration form.**
7. Exhibitors may enter as many exhibits as desired but may enter only one exhibit in a category. A grouping of items will be considered as one entry and will be judged as such.
8. The age and grade level of all Student exhibitors must be provided on their exhibits.
9. If upright backing or screens are used, the reverse side must be pleasing to the eye and must not detract in any way from the display on the opposite side of the table.
10. Information boards, narratives, or images shall not exceed 36" in height unless approved by West Coast Shell Show Chairperson. References used in identifications and for other scientific information may be placed in the cases or at the end of the

exhibit (please include in overall length). We suggest including information which helps explain or make the exhibit more interesting to the public.

11. The West Coast Shell Show Entry Committee, consisting of the West Coast Shell Show Chairperson, the judges and the President of San Diego Shell Club, reserves the right to refuse entry and/or to change the category of an exhibit if, in their opinion, it is better suited for a category other than the category in which it was entered.
12. **No exhibit shall exceed 16 feet in length unless approved** by the West Coast Shell Show Chairperson. Exhibitors should obtain prior approval for length exceptions as early as possible to ensure space availability.
13. No rule may be waived by any officer of the Club or by any member of the West Coast Shell Entry Committee.
14. Neither the San Diego Botanical Garden Foundation nor the San Diego Shell Club will be responsible for damages, theft, or loss to any exhibit. However, every effort will be made to safeguard exhibits.
15. **The decision of the judges is final.**
16. Any unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of any exhibitor as determined by the West Coast Shell Show Entry Committee will result in immediate expulsion from the present show and prohibition by the San Diego Shell Club Board of Directors from entering the West Coast Shell Show for a minimum of one year.
17. All exhibits must be the property of the exhibitor. **Borrowed shells, photographs, and/or sea art items may be included in "Any Manner" exhibits only if the owner is identified.**
18. All scientific/specimen shell exhibits must be displayed in cases constructed of wood or other material of equal stability. They must be covered with glass, Plexiglass, or other attractive transparent material. Plastic wrap will not be allowed. Exhibitor's name shall not appear on any exhibit until after judging.
19. **All specimens must be labeled with full scientific name** (genus, species or subspecies, author, date) and locality where collected. A diagrammatic chart may be used for labeling.
 - a. Label example:

<i>Oliva sayana</i>	Ravenel, 1834
Lettered Olive	
Gasparilla Island, FL	
Low tide at night, 1994	
 - b. Genus and species: Latin or Latinized names, underlined and/or *italicized*. Genus name must be capitalized and species name must be in lower case.
 - c. Leave space between genus and species name as shown above.

- d. Author and date: The person who first described and named the species and the year of authorship.
- e. Popular names may also be used but are not required.
- f. Author and date should be placed in parenthesis, if the species has been reclassified into a genus different from the one in which the author placed it originally.

II. JUDGING CRITERIA

All Exhibits at the West Coast Shell Show will be judged in accordance with the recommended standards for judging as outlined below.

A. MULTIPLE SHELL EXHIBITS - (100 total points)

Grading Categories	Maximum Points/ Point Breakdown
a. Aesthetics	25 points total
1. Aesthetics	20 points
2. Organization	5 points
b. Specimens	25 points total
1. Quality of Specimens	15 points
2. Comprehensiveness	10 points
c. Labels and Text	25 points total
d. Educational Value	25 points total
1. Clarity	10 points
2. Scientific Accuracy	10 points
3. Originality	5 points

B. SINGLE SHELL EXHIBITS (100 total points)

Grading Categories	Maximum Points/ Point Breakdown
Specimen	80 points total
Display	20 points total

III. SCIENTIFIC EXHIBIT COMPETATIVE CATEGORIES

C-1: **STUDENT** - Grades K through 6 - Any Manner

C-2: **STUDENT** - Grades 7 through 12 - Any Manner

C-3: **ONE REGION** - Any Manner

C-4: **SUPERFAMILY/FAMILY FROM ONE REGION** - Any Manner

- C-5: **ONE FAMILY** - Major Families - Any Manner judged on completeness of family representation. This category shall include the following popular shell families: Muricidae; Conidae; Cypraeidae; Volutidae; Strombidae; and Pectinidae.
- C-6: **ONE FAMILY** - Minor Families - Any Manner judged on completeness of family representation. This category includes all families not listed in C-5 above.
- C-7: **ONE GENUS** - Any Manner - Some families are considered to have only one genus, such as Haliotidae. These must be shown in C-5. If desired, sub-genera may be exhibited in this category.
- C-8: **ONE SPECIES** - Any Manner - The purpose of this category is to present a complete representation of the species rather than a large quantity of shells.
- C-9: **SINGLE SHELL WORLDWIDE** - Self-collected
- C-10: **SINGLE SHELL WORLDWIDE** - Any Manner
- C-11: **EDUCATIONAL** - The objective of this category is to teach or inform the viewer about the Phylum Mollusca. The exhibit could cover morphology, range locality, ecology, etc. It may include models, photographs, illustrations, growth series, etc. For example, it may include stories of shells in art, architecture, commerce, literature or items found in archaeological digs. The exhibit must include substantially more educational information than scientific/specimen shell labeling.

DEFINITIONS:

STUDENT: from Grade K through Grade 12.

SELF-COLLECTED means personally collected by the exhibitor while walking on the beach, snorkeling, scuba diving, etc. **NOTE:** A star must be placed, visibly on the label for each self-collected shell (unless in self-collected category) in order to be eligible for any self-collected award.

IV. NON-COMPETITIVE EXHIBIT CATAGORY

- NC-1: "Just for fun" exhibits. Any exhibit entered strictly to enhance the overall quality of the show. These exhibits do not qualify for any show ribbons or trophies.

V. ARTISTIC CLASS - SEA ART & SHELL CRAFT

- AC-1: Any shell or sea life theme featured on items made by the exhibitor. For example: drawings, paintings, photographs, sculptures, "Sailor's Valentines", shell boxes, mugs, ceramics, jewelry, glassware and the like.

VI. AWARDS

1. **THE WEST COAST SHELL SHOW AWARD** - This trophy was created in granite and bronze by Lisa Lindahl. It is a one-of-a-kind award presented to an exhibit that is, in the opinion of the Judges, exceptional in all respects, esthetically pleasing, inspires

interest in shells and shell collecting, contains the highest quality specimen shells, and demonstrates significant educational value. Because the criteria required to receive this award is so high, it may not be awarded every year. This is the third year that this award is being offered to exhibitors.

2. **FESTIVUS TROPHY** - A trophy presented to the exhibit that, in the opinion of the Judges, represents the most aesthetically pleasing (*i.e.* “beautiful”) exhibit.
3. **CONCHOLOGIST OF AMERICA AWARD** - A plaque presented by the COA to the scientific exhibit that shows overall excellence and best furthers interest in shells and shell collecting. It may be given only to a blue-ribbon winning exhibit that has not been awarded another major award in the present show. Dealers are not eligible for this award unless the exhibit is of self-collected shells.
4. **SHELL OF SHOW - Self Collected** - A trophy awarded to a shell chosen from any exhibit entered in any category of those shell specimens so identified by a star in other than self-collected categories. To be awarded for rarity and condition of specimen.
5. **SHELL OF SHOW - Any Manner** - A trophy awarded to a shell chosen from any exhibit, including self-collected, in any category. To be awarded for rarity and condition of specimen.
6. **DR. WES FARMER TROPHY FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE** - a trophy presented to the exhibit that, in the opinion of the Judges, displays outstanding educational value. Ribbons for first, and second place will also be awarded.
7. **BEST STUDENT EXHIBITOR - SCIENTIFIC (K - 6 and 7 - 12 are separately judged categories)** Ribbons for first and second place will be awarded.
8. **EXHIBITOR’S CHOICE AWARD - SCIENTIFIC (As voted by the exhibitors)** Ribbons for first and second place will be awarded. Each exhibitor gets three votes. Votes may be distributed among several exhibits or placed for a single exhibit. Winners are chosen based upon the total number of votes received.

AWARDS: There are seven categories with ribbons for First Place - Blue and Second Place - Red, four trophies and one Special Merit ribbon- Yellow. All awards are given at the Judges’ discretion. If in the opinion of the Judges, and at their sole discretion, there are insufficient exhibits by participants in the show to qualify for an award, then such trophy or ribbons will not be awarded.

West Coast Shell Show Award 2026 Restrictions and Judging Criteria

I. West Coast Shell Show Award Restrictions

The San Diego Shell Club, sponsors of the West Coast Shell Show, **will not** present awards to exhibitors who have previously exhibited and won awards for the same display less than five years prior to the current show.

Purposes:

- to **restrict** the repeated entry of exhibits that have already been presented in a previous WCSS show less than five years prior to the current show.
- to **allow** other exhibitors to compete for an award that was previously awarded to a repeat exhibit entered less than five years prior to the current WCSS show.
- to **limit** awarding the WCSS Trophy, the Festivus Award and/or the COA Award to repeated entries of exhibits that have already received one or more of these awards.
- to **provide** new exhibits each year for WCSS attendees to enjoy.
- to **reduce** multiple awards being presented at the WCSS for the same exhibit.
- to **encourage** new exhibitors to exhibit by allowing them to compete for the same award won by other exhibitors in previous years.
- to **promote** new displays from exhibitors that have demonstrated their talents in receiving awards at the WCSS for previous exhibits.
- to **inspire** WCSS attendees to consider exhibiting while having the same opportunities as a previous award-winning exhibitors to receive an award for their work.

II. Clarification of the Criteria for Awarding the West Coast Shell Show Trophy

The San Diego Shell Club, sponsors of the West Coast Shell Show, has decided to clarify and further elaborate on the terms and phrases used in the criteria for awarding the West Coast Shell Show trophy Section “VI” of the rules provides the following on The West Coast Shell Show Trophy:

“This trophy was created in granite and bronze by Lisa Lindahl. It is a one-of-a-kind award presented to an exhibit that is, in the opinion of the Judges:

1. exceptional in all respects,
2. esthetically pleasing,
3. inspires interest in shells and shell collecting,
4. contains the highest quality specimen shells, and
5. demonstrates significant educational value.

Because the criteria required to receive this award is so high, it may not be awarded every year. This is the fourth year that this award is being offered to exhibitors.”

For the benefit of Exhibitors and Judges these five criteria are further elaborated below.

1. “exceptional in all respects”, (Maximum points allocated 20)

In the judge’s opinion and discretion:

- the exhibit contains information about conchology, malacology, shell collecting, shell art or shells in general that is well written and easy to read (*e.g.*, including general interest or scientific information),
- the exhibit has a title representative of the topic of the exhibit, the information is presented in a logical format, and is provided in an easily readable font size, with proper use of grammar, punctuation, spelling as well as proper sentence and paragraph structure,
- the shell labels are in the proper format and contain the information required by the show rules,
- the display case is one of the cases provided by the San Diego Shell Club or one of similar construction provided by the exhibitor and is in good condition (*i.e.*, not damaged or having obvious wear. The case should be in new or in “like new” condition with minimal wear), the display case cover should be made of glass or polymer that is undamaged and clean (*i.e.*, there should be no visual obstructions when viewing the contents of the display case),
- the colors used in the exhibit complement the shells on display,
- the information panel of the exhibit is positioned so that the text can be easily read and the images easily viewed; the panel is upright, in good condition and flat unless the information is intentionally displayed in three dimensions (*i.e.*, free of damage or wear),
- the specimen shells displayed in the exhibit are referenced in the text individually or as a group (*i.e.*, no extraneous shells are exhibited), the shells are in a condition and/or position necessary to show the aspects of the shell referenced in the text (*i.e.*, if referring to the mouth of the shell in the text, then the shell is displayed with the mouth exposed so that judges can see the aspect referenced by the text), and
- the shells displayed are not crowded (*i.e.*, they are spaced apart in a way that allows the judges to see all aspects of the shell as referenced in the text).

2. “esthetically pleasing”, (Maximum points allocated 20)

In the judge’s opinion and discretion:

- the exhibit is pleasing to look at, the font selection, size and color of the text are pleasing to the eyes of the judges, and it is easily read and understood,
- the images provided are clear, they contain appropriate content when viewed in context of the exhibit, the images are cropped appropriately, they show or help to

explain the information in the text, and there are an appropriate number of images to aid the judges in understanding the exhibit.

- the information panel is upright, secured in place and at a level that can be easily read and viewed by the judges. The colors utilized in the information panel complement each other as well as the shells on display.
- the condition of the display box adds to the overall attractiveness of the exhibit (*i.e.*, the condition of the display box does not divert or distract the attention of the judges from the content of the exhibit). The glass or polymer display box cover is clean, and the case is nicely painted, stained or lacquered. There is no obvious damage or extensive wear on the display case.
- the shells in the exhibit are in excellent condition (*e.g.*, the exhibit does not contain shells that are significantly damaged, worn or otherwise in poor condition). The color, pattern, and/or structure of the shells exhibited are of high quality for that species.
- shells are displayed in a way that enhances the overall appearance of the exhibit (*e.g.*, individual shells are mounted on pedestals that bring small, medium, and large shells to a similar level for adequate viewing, two shells of each species are displayed to show the topside and underside simultaneously, and/or rotating stands are used to show all sides of the shell)

3. “inspires interest in shells and shell collecting”, (Maximum points allocated 20)

In the judge’s opinion and discretion:

- the shells displayed are of such diversity, or individual shells are of such quality, or certain characteristics of individual shells are so unusual or attractive that the Judges consider the exhibit to be one that inspires interest in shells.
- the information provided is assessed by the judges to be sufficiently intriguing to encourage viewers to pursue similar activities that would result in similar experiences and interest in shells.
- the appearance of the exhibit is such that it draws the attention of the judges, inspires the reading of the exhibit’s information, and captures the interest in learning more about shells or shell collecting.

4. “contains the highest quality specimen shells”, (Maximum points allocated 20)

In the judge’s opinion and discretion:

- the shells are of specimen quality. More specifically, they are gem or as close to gem condition as possible unless the shell is so rare that quality can be eliminated as a criteria for grading this exhibit (in the judge’s opinion),
- shells can be of average configuration and not deter from receiving high marks in this category. For example, some murexes have short spines and little or no varices while others have long spines and large varices. Those with large spines

- and varices are often times more attractive, but this will not be used as criteria to remove points when grading this exhibit,
- shell color may vary and shells that do not have the most desirable color will not reduce the number of points given in this category.
 - the condition, configuration and/or color is consistent with the discussion in the text of the exhibit (*i.e.*, if discussing the length of the spines, varices or saturation of the color, then the shells displayed should represent what is being discussed in the exhibit).
 - the exhibit focuses on beached shells, naturally modified shells (*e.g.*, coral growth on surface) or shells in poor condition in compliance with the discussion in the text of the exhibit, and additional shells of those species are displayed to show how these shells look in gem condition unless the shell is so rare that quality can be eliminated as a criteria for grading this exhibit.

and

5. “demonstrates significant educational value”, (Maximum points allocated 20)

In the judge’s opinion and discretion:

- the research presented in the exhibit was performed in a laboratory or online over the Internet and the theory/theories, hypothesis/hypotheses, or conclusion/conclusions, given the information presented, is scientifically sound or well-reasoned such that, in the judge’s opinion, it contributes to a better understanding of Molluscan biology.
- the phrase “educational value” is any information that assists the Judge in a better understanding of the topic of the exhibit, provides information not previously known to science, corrects a problem with understanding the biological systems of mollusks, corrects taxonomy or provides evidence to support a name correction and the like.
- the term “significant” is any information that provides an explanation of a topic that is not well understood, is not known or presented in a way that makes the judge reevaluate an existing understanding of mollusks. More specifically, not all information presented in an exhibit will be considered “significant”. For example, noting that a particular species of bursa has variable parietal shield colors is not considered significant. However, a finding that a particular color of the shield indicates that the individual is a female and is of breeding age and is enlarged to cover and protect eggs prior to hatching is considered significant.
- the identification of a new species, the renaming of an already known species, the separation of multiple species from one previously named species or the name correction of a improperly named species are of educational value. It is in the judge’s discretion as to whether this “educational value” is “significant” in view of the other exhibits in the show.

Purpose: to assist exhibitors in selecting, preparing, and displaying their exhibits when competing for the West Coast Shell Show trophy. In addition, to provide guidelines that judges may use in assigning points on these criteria as well as assist them in answering questions from exhibitors regarding the grading of their exhibits.