

**The reinstatement of *Voluta rossiteri* Brazier, 1898 (Mollusca: Volutidae)  
from Victoria, Australia and notes on its taxonomic placement  
and importance for conservation**

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**ABSTRACT** This paper seeks to bring clarity to an area of continuous taxonomy in the Volutidae. The taxon referred to collectors and researchers as *Notovoluta rossiteri* (Brazier, 1898) is considered valid and reinstated as a full species. This study prepares the way for more work on *Notovoluta rossiteri* through the examination of the shifting taxonomic placement of this enigmatic *Notovoluta* from off the southern Victorian Coast.

**KEYWORDS** *Alcithoe arabica*, Australia, *Notovoluta*, *Notovoluta rossiteri*, Taxonomy, Volutidae

## INTRODUCTION

Recent reviews have highlighted the need for a complete review of the Australian Volutidae of which this paper forms part (Maxwell & Berschauer 2023; Zheng & Maxwell 2025a, 2025b). The taxonomy of volutes is fraught with erroneous interpretations and assumptions that have a propensity to be compounded as many taxonomists tend to rely on the work of their predecessors often without critical thought. There are currently no known circumscribed extant *Notovoluta* in the waters of Victoria, Australia, recognized. This paper reinstates *Notovoluta rossiteri* (Brazier, 1898) as a full species and mark that genus within Victorian waters.

Historically, *Voluta rossiteri* Brazier, 1898 has been used to differentiate a juvenile dead Victorian shell taken from Lakes Entrance. The original description of Brazier (1898) did not provide an image of the species in the manuscript with the description, which has led to an assumption as to what is to be considered the holotype (Figure 1).

*Voluta rossiteri* was placed in the taxonomic list with the original description of the genus *Notovoluta* Cotton, 1946 along with *V. kreuslerae* (Angas, 1865) (South Australia), *V. verconus* (Tate, 1892) (South Australia) and *N. occidua* Cotton, 1946 (southern Western Australia) (Cotton 1946) (Figure 2 and 3). Cotton (1946) gave no substantive comments on the nature of *V. rossiteri* other than its location and provisional placement. Abbottsmith (1969) followed this assessment, placing *V. rossiteri* within the *Notovoluta*, referring to SAM D8322 as the only intact example with fragments of other examples known to that author but lost. Weaver and Du Pont (1970) list *Notovoluta rossiteri* as a full species; however, while Wilson (1972) and Darragh (1989) agreed and placed *V. rossiteri* within *Notovoluta*, these authors synonymized it under *N. kreuslerae* based again on SAM D8322, with both deeming *V. rossiteri* a large *N. kreuslerae*.

Current assessment of the *V. rossiteri* has it tied to SAM D8322 (Abbottsmith 1969; Weaver & Du Pont 1970; Wilson 1972; Darragh 1989;

Willan 1995). However, the allocation of SAM D8322 has set precedence (Willan 1995): 1) Brazier was in error in his locality data assessment, with the shell not from Victoria as Brazier thought, Willan argued that it must have come from New Zealand; 2) Brazier erred in measuring the shell correctly, overstating its size, Willan claims 84 mm while Brazier claims 108 mm; and 3) Brazier erred in assessing the number of whorls as six, Willan declares three.

While the purported Holotype specimen is inconsistent with the original description, we hypothesize that these differences can be attributed to the secondary material that Abbottsmith (1969) mentions, which would indicate that Brazier was able to provide a more complete description based on a composite of undeclared paratype material. The earliest illustration of SAM D8322 shows a shell of 108 mm with six whorls (Abbottsmith 1969, Figure 1). Notwithstanding, the current assessment by all authors of *V. rossiteri* is grounded in Brazier having made fundamental descriptive errors in the size and whorls. SAM D8322 may not be the shell Brazier intended as the *V. rossiteri*, but there is no current alternative that has been suggested out of the Kenyon collection from which Brazier drew his material, currently held in the SAM, and therefore we defer to the consensus of this name being tied type allocation to maintain stability. There remains confusion on the placement of the species – *Alcithoe* (Willan 1995) vs. *Notovoluta* (Cotton 1946, Weaver & Du Pont 1970, Wilson 1972, Darragh 1989). Willan's (1995) assessment currently stands and *Voluta rossiteri* Brazier, 1898, based on SAM D8322, is accepted as a synonym of *Alcithoe arabica* (Gmelin, 1791), in this placement, we disagree. It is the authors' opinion that Willan (1995) erred in his volute work.

Willan's (1995) relocation of the type of *Amoria spenceriana* (Gatliff, 1908) is a mistake given the clear information on that species' residence and variability in Queensland as set forth in Abbottsmith (1969). Willan missed this work and redesignated the type location 3000 km to the west, into a different ocean altogether, caused by the confusion that there were two locations that have "Ashmore" in their name: the Ashmore Banks (Queensland) and Ashmore Reef (Western Australia). The detailed discussion of the nuanced morphological differences given by Zheng & Maxwell 2025a were not discussed by Willan.

Willan's (1995) illustrated orientation of *Notovoluta rossiteri*, where the columella plaits are not visible, results in an image that indicates an unplaited columella that is inconsistent with the true defining characteristics of SAM D8322, notwithstanding the text supplied. Furthermore, in the case of *V. rossiteri*, Willan (2000), rejects the Cotton (1946), Abbottsmith (1969), Weaver and Du Pont (1970), Wilson (1972), Darragh (1989) assessments of SAM D8322, based on his self-confessed experience in the ability to discern the nuanced variability of New Zealand Volutidae and lumped it with the synonym of *Alcithoe arabica* where it falls well outside the range of that endemic taxon.

Currently, the Atlas of Living Australia (ala.org.au accessed 29/08/2025) has no record of extant *Notovoluta* from Victoria. This lapse in not accounting for *Notovoluta rossiteri* can be attributed to its erroneous synonymization. Notwithstanding, *Notovoluta rossiteri* differs in having a more sculptured spire, prominent axial ridges on the shoulder and a wider body whorl, as well as being a larger shell size.

**Abbreviations**

SAM South Australian Museum,  
Adelaide

**SYSTEMATIC PART**

Order Prosobranchia Milne Edwards,  
1848  
 Infraorder Neogastropoda Wenz, 1938  
 Superfamily Volutoidea Rafinesque, 1815  
 Family Volutidae Rafinesque, 1815  
 Genus *Notovoluta* Cotton, 1946

***Notovoluta rossiteri* (Brazier, 1898)**

Figure 1

**Original Description.** The original description with type location and illustrations of the purported holotype are found in Figure 1.

**Type Material.** Holotype – Lakes Entrance Victoria, SAM D8322 (Abbottsmith 1969; Weaver and Du Pont 1970; Wilson 1972; Darragh 1989; Willan 1995).

**Synonymy.**

*Voluta rossiteri* Brazier, 1898, p. 779-780.

*Notovoluta rossiteri* Brazier – Cotton, 1946, p. 16. Abbottsmith 1969, p. 81, fav. 392. Wilson 1972, p. 348. Darragh 1989, pl. 5, fig. 1.

*Notovoluta rossiterrie* Brazier – Weaver and du Pont, 1970, pl. 72, figs. F and G.

*Alcithoe arabica* Gmelin – Willan, 1995, figs. 9 and 10.

**COMPARATIVE REMARKS AND DISCUSSION**

It is a grave taxonomic error to place *Notovoluta rossiteri* (Brazier, 1898) as a synonym of *Alcithoe arabica* (Gmelin, 1791), a New Zealand endemic. For it not only gives a false positive to the range, but devalues that taxon, and *Notovoluta rossiteri*, in the face of

offshore wind farms and other benthic impacting developments, is a species possibly at high risk of extinction. This risk to biodiversity is high as a consequence of uninformed rulings on offshore sites, based on an underestimation of ecosystem diversity, especially when the data is compiled from deceptive taxonomic lists. Taxonomists must be careful not to fall into the habits of prior generations by utilizing taxonomy by decree.

**CONCLUSION**

The holotype of *V. rossiteri* in general form is somewhat inconsistent with that species in spire sculpture and columella, and until more material is obtained, a provisional placement in *Alcithoe* and in particular within the synonymy of *V. arabica* as described by Willan (1995) is rejected. We reinstate *Notovoluta rossiteri* as a full species, one which is enigmatic and which needs to be further researched, particularly in relation to the supplementary material that is alluded to in Abbottsmith (1969). Such auxiliary work is outside the scope of this paper. Interestingly, Abbottsmith (1969) postulated that a devastating petroleum accident, which decimated the Victorian continental shelf fauna, may have caused the extinction of the highly localised *V. rossiteri*, but this has not been substantiated.

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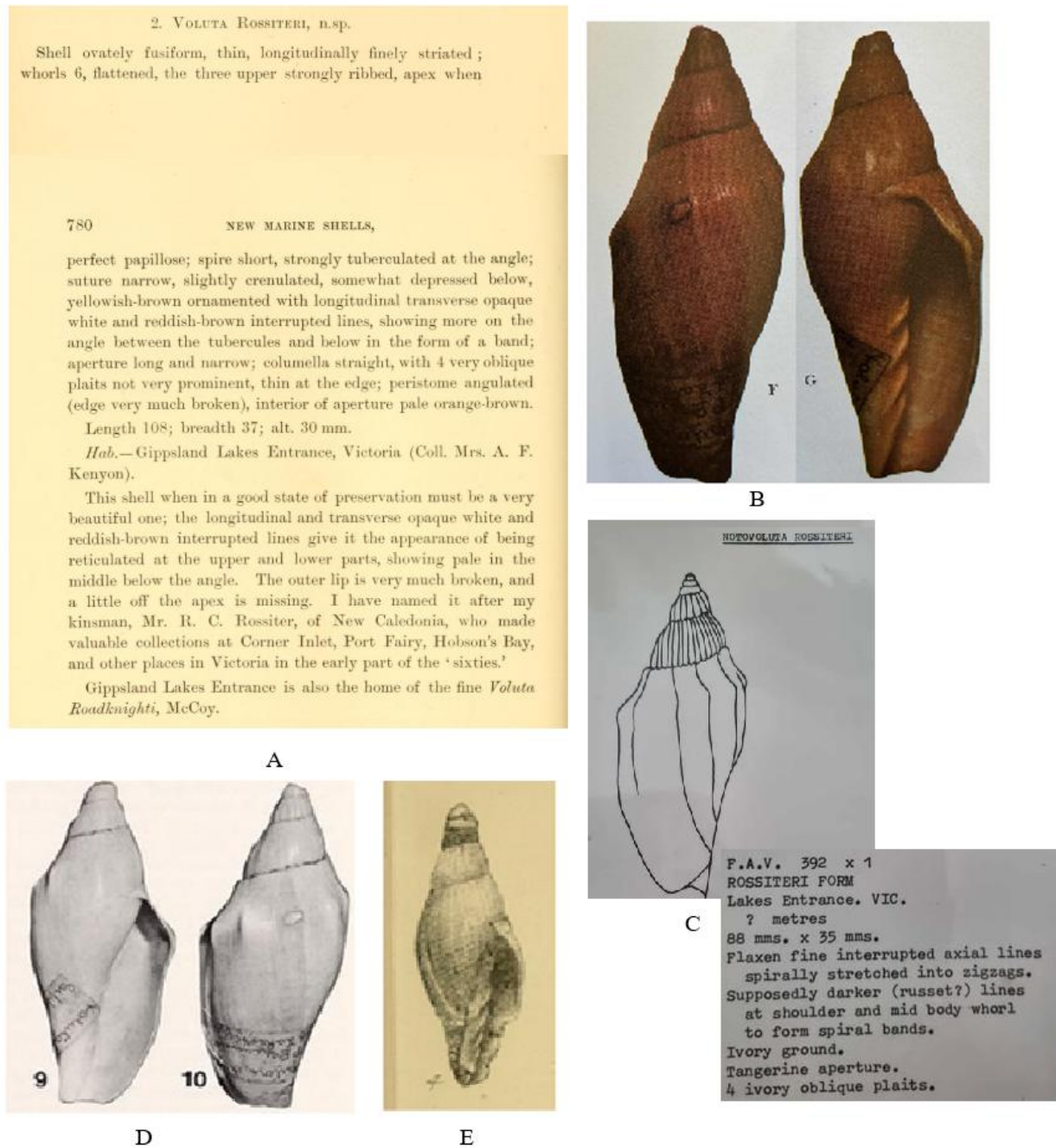
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New Taxa Published in *The Festivus* in 2025:

*Phyllonotus feliciae* Berschauer & Petuch, 2025; *Aspella pacifica* Raines & Johnson, 2025; *Eucypraedia hawkei* Celzard, 2025<sup>†</sup>; *Scaphella junonia sheltoni* Petuch & Berschauer, 2025; *Marginella (Piperamarginella) nubila* Veldsman, 2025; *Marginella (Piperamarginella) flammeamaculosa* Veldsman, 2025; *Marginella (Piperamarginella) pseudostrigata* Veldsman, 2025; *Amoria textilata* Zheng & Maxwell, 2025; *Marginella (Piperamarginella) subpallida* Veldsman, 2025; *Marginella (Piperamarginella) cremeonuca* Veldsman, 2025; *Strombus guyanensis* Massemin, Petuch, & Berschauer, 2025; *Cymbiola distructa* Zheng & Maxwell, 2025; *Jaspidiconus carnaval* Crabos, Petuch, Monteiro & Monteiro, 2025; *Zoila kostini leemanica* Mont, 2025; *Protoarchivolva* Celzard & Alberti, 2025<sup>†</sup>; *Protoarchivolva aurorae* Celzard & Alberti, 2025<sup>†</sup>; *Columbarium ashleyfieldi* Zheng & Maxwell, 2025; *Ganesella vanessae* Celzard, 2025; *Tudivasum gracelumwanae* Zheng & Maxwell, 2025; *Gradiconus aliceae* Petuch & Berschauer, 2025; *Neptunea willetti* Clark, 2025; *Neptunea cincticula* Clark, 2025; *Neptunea grovesi* Clark, 2025; *Cylinder chantillyi* R. Aiken, 2025; *Lobatus palikur* Massemin, Petuch, & Berschauer, 2025; *Notovoluta portlandensis* Zheng & Maxwell, 2025; *Voluta caquetio* Berschauer & Ros, 2025; *Coltroconus altumstrictus* Fenzan & Minior, 2025; *Amoria peregrina* Mattiske & Hallan, 2025; *Amoria compressa* Mattiske & Hallan, 2025; *Olivella ellenae* Petuch & Berschauer, 2025; *Jaspidiconus alagoensis*, Crabos & Monteiro, 2025; *Poremskiconus neobrasiliensis* Monteiro, Crabos & Monteiro, 2025; *Austroharpa pasi* Hawke & Guyonneau, 2025<sup>†</sup>; *Morum solus* Hawke & Guyonneau, 2025<sup>†</sup>.



**Figure 1.** A= The original description of *Notovoluta rossiteri* (Brazier, 1898, pp. 779-780); images of SAM D8322, the purported holotype of *V. rossiteri*; B= Weaver and du Pont 1970, pl. 72, figs. F and G; C= Abbottsmith 1969, p. 81, fav. 392; D= Willan 1995, figs. 9 and 10; E= Darragh 1989, pl. 5, fig. 1; note the inconsistency between the visualised structural elements of the shell in images.