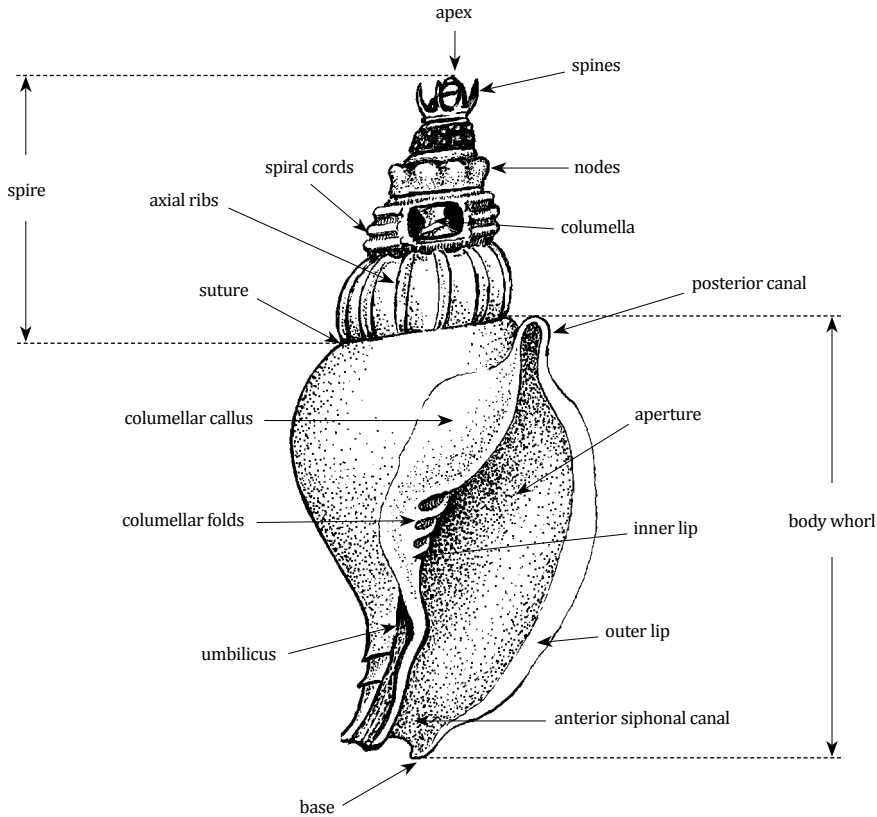


# GASTROPODS

Several marine gastropod species are commercially important in Kenya and are collected locally by artisanal fishermen for food, as bait and for the shell market. The “Guide to Families” and “Guide to Species” include 4 families and 6 species, respectively.

## TECHNICAL TERMS AND MEASUREMENTS



ventral view of a composite shell

**Aperture:** Opening of shell, at the last formed margin; in a spiral shell, the margin nearer to the coiling axis forms the inner lip, and the opposite margin the outer lip.

**Base:** Lower part of the shell, anterior to level of periphery of body whorl.

**Body whorl:** The largest, last turn of the spiral in a coiled shell.

**Callus:** Thick secondary deposit of lime, generally shiny and porcellaneous.

**Columella:** Coiling axis of shell, forming the lower part of inner lip.

**Nucleus:** Earliest formed part of the operculum.

**Operculum:** Horny or calcareous part attached to the foot, sealing aperture when animal retracts within the shell.

**Sculpture:** Relief pattern on shell surface. When parallel to the curve of whorls, sculptural elements are spiral; when parallel to the coiling axis, they are axial.

**Shoulder:** Distinct spiral angulation of a whorl.

**Siphonal canal:** Trough-like or tubular extension of aperture anteriorly, for inclosure of a fleshy siphon.

**Spire:** All the whorls of a shell, except the last one.

**Suture:** Spiral line or groove of shell surface, where adjacent whorls meet.

**Umbilicus:** Opening at base of shell made around the coiling axis when columella is hollow.

**Varix (pl. varices):** Axial rib-like thickening of the outer surface of shell, representing a previous growth halt during which the outer lip of aperture thickened.

### GUIDE TO FAMILIES

#### STROMBIDAE

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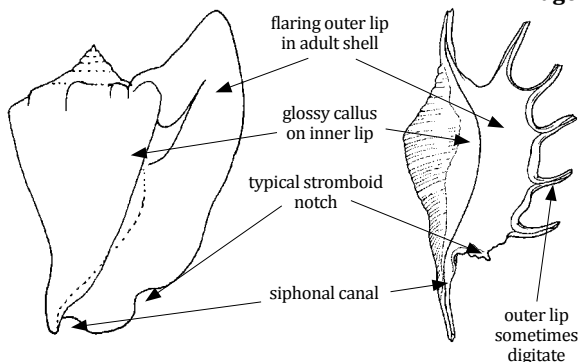
##### Conchs

To about 45 cm. Marine. Two species of interest to fisheries are included in the Guide to Species.

thick and corneous, hook-shaped



operculum

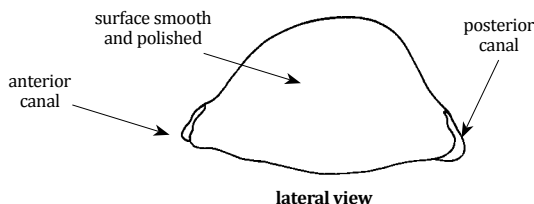


#### CYPRAEIDAE

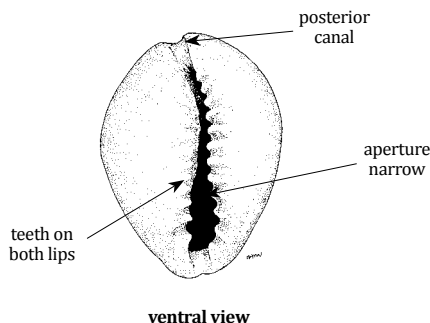
Page 37

##### Cowries

To about 20 cm. Marine. Two species of interest to fisheries are included in the Guide to Species.



lateral view



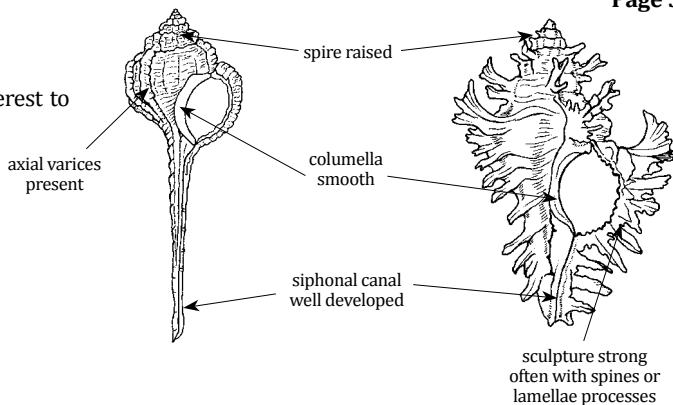
ventral view

#### MURICIDAE

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##### Murex shells

To about 30 cm. Marine. One species of interest to fisheries is included in the Guide to Species.



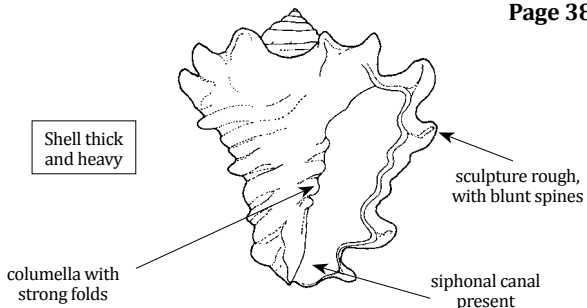
#### TURBINELLIDAE

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##### Vase shells

To about 15 cm. Marine. One species of interest to fisheries is included in the Guide to Species.

Shell thick and heavy



## STROMBIDAE

### *Lambis lambis* (Linnaeus, 1758)

**Local name(s):** N: Dodo viadha; S: Dodo (M/K).

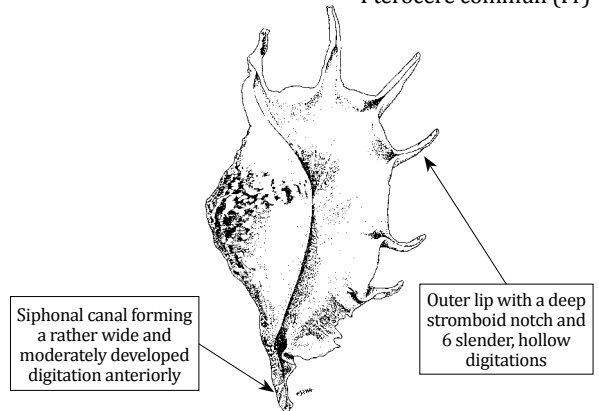
**Habitat:** Common on reef flats and on coral-rubble bottoms or in mangrove areas, usually associated with fine red algae on which it feeds.

**Fisheries:** Caught by hands.

**Distinctive Characters:** Shell large, thick and heavy, with a moderately high, pointed spire; spire whorls slightly concave on their apical half, with fine spiral threads and a row of relatively small knobs on the sharply angulate shoulder; dorsal side of body whorl rough, with low, irregular spiral cords and 2 or 3 spiral rows of blunt tubercles, forming large knobs on the shoulder.

**Colour:** Outer coloration of shell variable, cream to tan, often with various patterns of brown, purplish-tan, or bluish-black.

**FAO names:** Common spider conch (En)  
Ptérocère commun (Fr)



**Size:** To 29 cm, common 18 cm (SL)

### *Lambis truncata* (Humphrey, 1786)

**Local name(s):** N: Dodo viadha; S: Dodo (M/K).

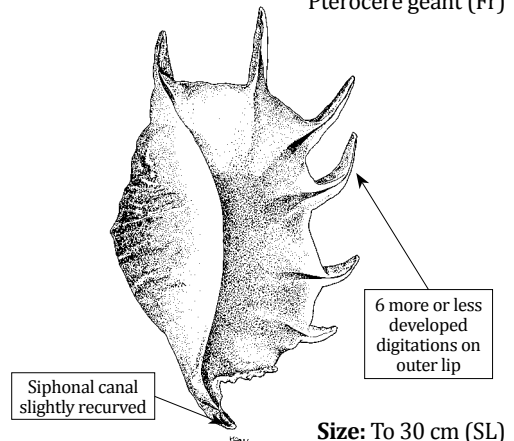
**Habitat:** Occurs in shallow waters of coastal reef flats, mainly on sandy, algal, and coral rubble bottoms.

**Fisheries:** Caught by hands.

**Distinctive Characters:** Strong knobs on spire whorls; aperture and lips smooth, stromboid notch shallow.

**Colour:** Outer shell creamy tan to dark-brown; only slightly mottled; aperture and lips creamy pink.

**FAO names:** Giant spider conch (En)  
Ptérocère géant (Fr)



**Size:** To 30 cm (SL)

## CYPRAEIDAE

### *Lyncina lynx* (Linnaeus, 1758)

**Local name(s):** N & S: No information.

**Habitat:** Mostly found under coral slabs and stones or half exposed in crevices; often found in small groups.

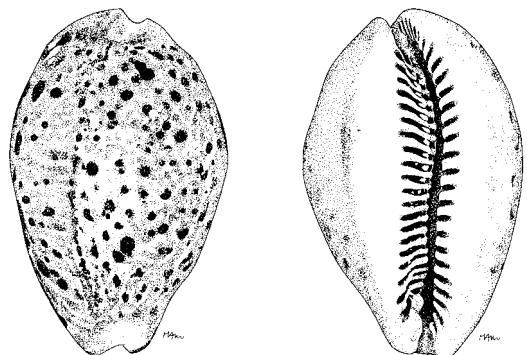
**Fisheries:** Caught by hands.

**Distinctive Characters:** Aperture long and narrow, with several white teeth and a bright reddish spacing.

**Colour:** Dorsal surface generally pale brown, pale purple or grey, densely covered with small and large dark brown or purple dots; the large spots are extended to the edges; the base is white or pale brown.

**Remarks:** Collected for food and for its shell.

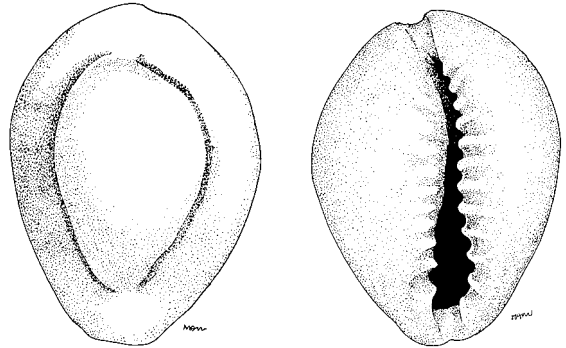
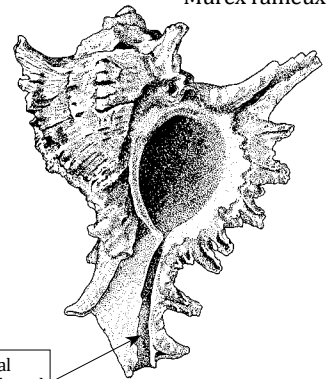
**FAO names:** Lynx cowrie (En)



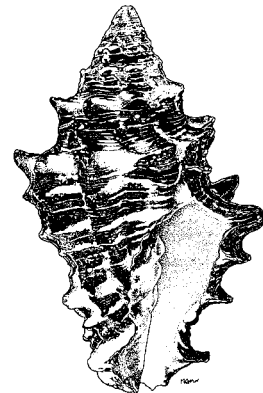
**Size:** To 9 cm (SL)

***Monetaria annulus*** (Linnaeus, 1758)

FAO names: Gold ring cowrie (En)

**Local name(s):** N & S: No information.**Habitat:** Widespread in shallow waters, occurring in every kind of habitat, even sandy bottoms; most common in shallow tidal pools under vegetation and stones.**Fisheries:** Caught by hands.**Remarks:** Mainly collected for shellcraft.**Distinctive Characters:** Strong teeth, with slight ridges on columella.**Colour:** Cream–white, yellowish or greyish with a conspicuous golden ring.**Size:** To 4 cm (SL)**MURICIDAE*****Chicoreus ramosus*** (Linnaeus, 1758)FAO names: Ramose mureux (En)  
Murex rameux (Fr)**Local name(s):** N: Fondo koa; S: Dodo (M/K).**Habitat:** Muddy gravel and coarse sand bottoms of coral reef flats, in littoral zones and shallow sub-tidal waters.**Fisheries:** Caught by hands.**Distinctive Characters:** Three axial varices per whorl; each with strong, frond-like spines.**Colour:** White to light brown, often with scattered brown flecks between varices; aperture white, suffused with pink to orange–red on lips.**Remarks:** Collected by local fishermen for food and used as bait.Siphonal canal  
moderately long, broad  
and slightly curved**Size:** To 33 cm (SL)**TURBINELLIDAE*****Vasum ceramicum*** (Linnaeus, 1758)

FAO names: Ceram vase (En)

**Local name(s):** N: Fondo koa; S: Dodo (M/K).**Habitat:** On shallow reefs; intertidal and shallow sublittoral zones, to a depth of about 20 m.**Fisheries:** Caught by hand; the flesh is used as food or as bait by fishermen, and the thick shell as a source of lime; it is also sold for shell collections.**Distinctive Characters:** Shell elongated with a long siphonal canal and only three strong columella folds.**Colour:** Usually white–grey, often partially obscured by a dark thin organic coating (periostracum).**Size:** To 16 cm (SL)