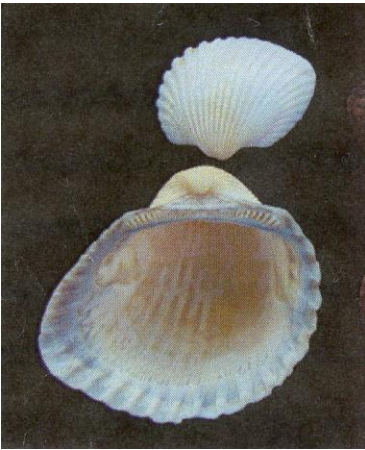
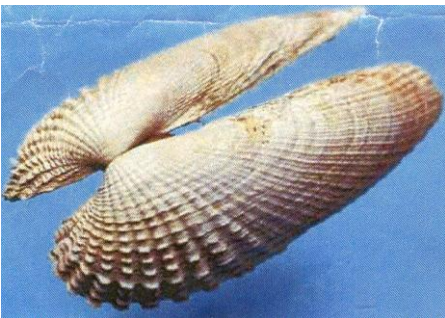


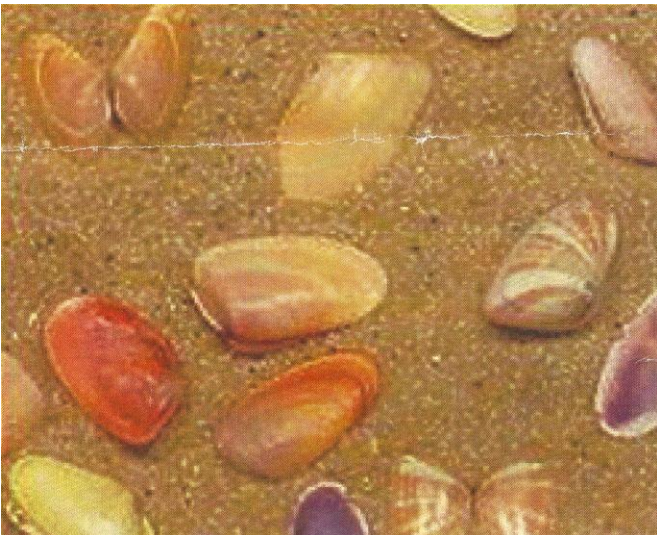
The Giant Atlantic Cockle has a large muscular foot that is dark red. It pushes its foot against the sand to move itself in rolls and leaps. Its shell has brown, tan and cream colors arranged in rows and splotches.



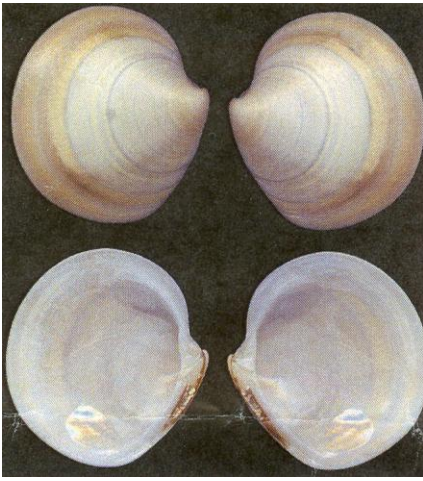
There are several kinds of **ark clams**. Since it is hard to break their thick shells, arks can often be found on the beach. They use a short siphon (a straw-like tube) to filter plankton from the water. Notice the teeth-like marks where the shell is hinged together, this indicates it is an ark clam - good beachcombers can identify at least three kinds of ark clams by their shape and appearance.



Angel Wing This thin-shelled clam burrows deep into the mud of bay shores and extends its long siphons just above the mud to circulate food and water. The muscles holding the sides together are weak so it can't close its shell completely and depends on the mud to hold it together.



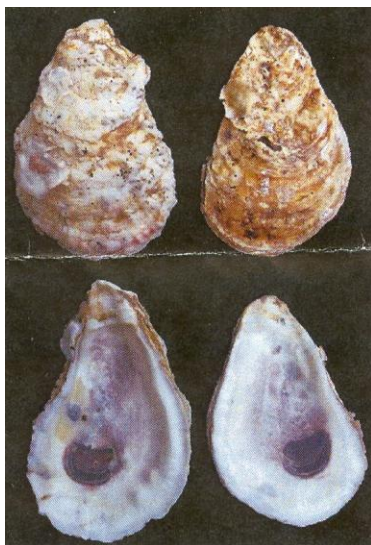
Coquina clams are tiny bivalves found in the surf zone. They rely on the movement of the waves to stir up their food, so they migrate with the tide. They are unburied by the waves and feed on the newly lifted particles of food, then quickly burrow in order to escape predatory shore birds that love to eat them!



The **Disk Clam** lives several inches below the sand along the coast. Shells found on the beach often have neat holes drilled by a predatory gastropod (snail) that ate the animal. The Moon Snail loves to eat disk clams.



The **Lettered Olive** glides along just under the sand by extending the foot and then pulling the shell forward. It is shinier than most shells because the golden-colored mantle, part of its body, almost covers the shell, protecting it from getting scratched as it moves through the sand.



The shell of the **Eastern Oyster** is usually very bumpy. That is because each season the **Eastern Oyster** grows the new layer of shell bigger or smaller depending on how salty the water is, how clear the water is, and how plentiful food is. When conditions are poor, the oyster stops feeding until conditions get better. Oyster larva must attach to something hard in order to live and they like to settle on big piles of oysters when they can. They like brackish water best and live mostly in bays. There are huge oyster reefs in Galveston Bay.



Pen Shells are the largest bivalves of the Texas coast.

They live in colonies, anchored in place under the sand or mud by silky threads near the pointed part of the shell.

The wide end is above the sand so it can take in food. If a predator attacks, it pulls its body into the pointed part of the shell. If a predator damages the shell, the animal repairs it by making new shell.



The **Lightning Whelk**, the Texas state shell, is a carnivorous snail (gastropod) that eats small bivalves by grasping them with its foot and forcing the shell open, then cutting away the flesh with its rasp-like radula. It lays eggs in a string of disk-like capsules with up to 200 eggs in each capsule. The young pass through all their larval stages within the capsule, emerging as miniature snails.



The **Shark's Eye (Moon Snail)** plows through the sand to eat bivalves and other snails. It has an enormous foot that can expand to twice the area of the shell. It wraps its foot around the prey and drills a perfectly round hole into the shell, injects some digestive juices through the hole, then sucks the animal out. When the Shark's Eye retracts into its shell it must drain out the fluid in its foot so it can fold it into the shell.