

## Rare Specimen (Abalone)

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Discovery of a highly abnormal abalone, one without holes in its shell, is reported in the current issue of *The Veliger*, a scientific journal devoted to the mollusks of the Pacific coast.

What makes the creature worth writing about, according to David Leighton, the author, is that it is probably the only such abalone specimen found in which the absence of normal respiratory apertures cannot be traced to an accident during its early stages.

This one is apparently a mutation, a creature that differs significantly from its kind, Leighton, a Marine Technician at The University of California's Scripps Institution of Oceanography, says.

The abalone draws water in under its shell and expels it, laden with waste products, through the holes in the shell. Biologically speaking, it is a primitive creature. More complex mollusks lack such holes.

The unique specimen is a small red abalone less than an inch long. It was found clinging to a kelp holdfast that washed ashore in Pacific Beach last year.