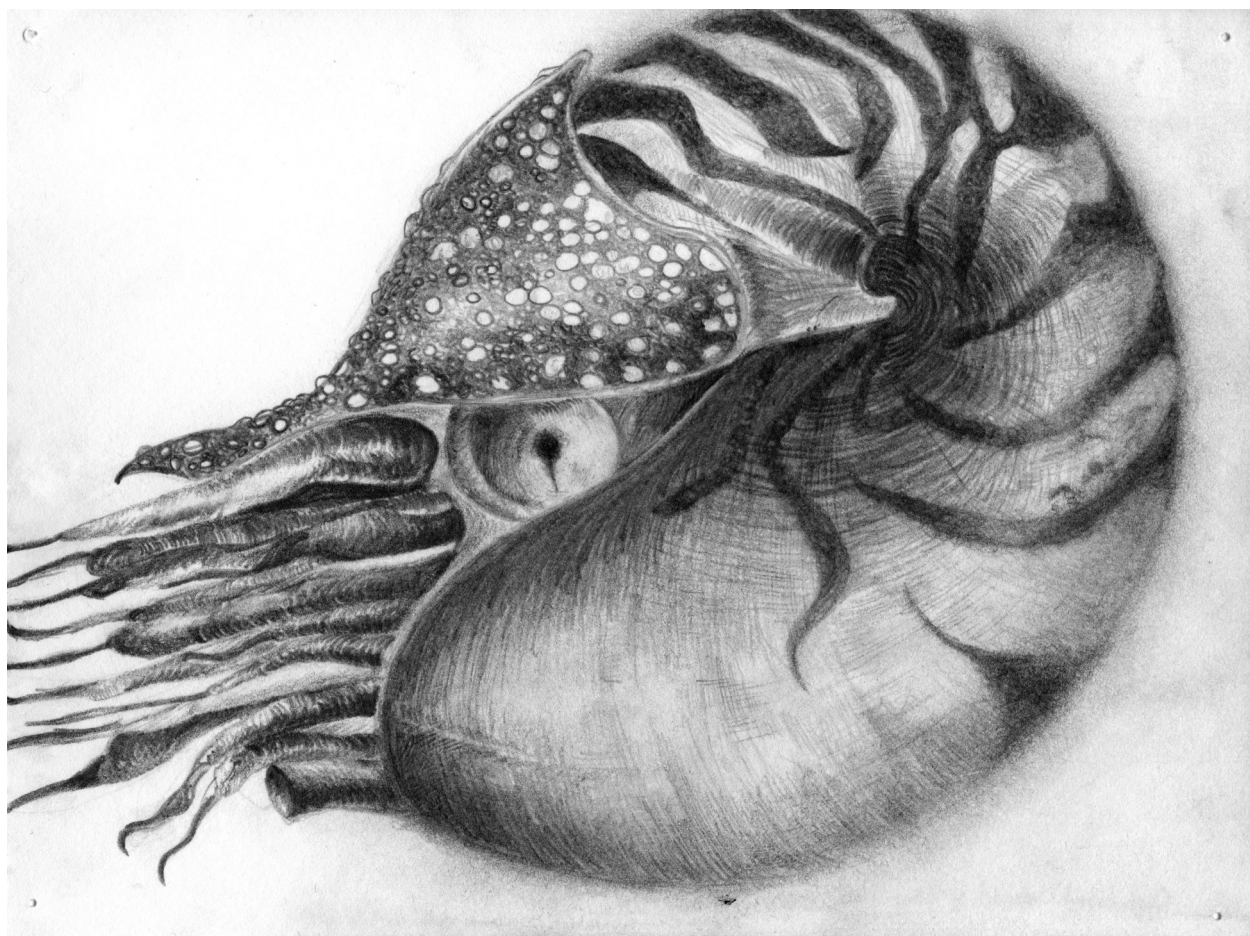


The Chambered Nautilus

- a "living fossil"



“One of the oldest surviving cephalopods, the Chambered nautilus (*Nautilus pompilius*) is a curious organism distinguished by its Fibonacci spiral, tens of appendages and an intricately connected system of chambers inside the shell to control its buoyancy and position in the water column. Whereas its locomotory strategy by jet propulsion is similar to other species in the same class, its cognitive function is significantly reduced, and the underdeveloped eyes lack corneas. This more primitive physiology of the *Nautilus pompilius* is similar to its fossilised ancestors from 500 million years ago, showing this “living fossil” has undergone little evolution since the Paleozoic era.

This Chambered nautilus remains understudied; now the species is also in drastic decline due to overharvesting, as its shells are deemed valuable hunting trophies. Due to the low migratory ability and the isolated populations of the nautilus, further decreases to its population size will endanger its survival; and without the immediate implementation of conservation strategies, the *Chambered nautilus* may be lost forever. This illustration is an effort to introduce this peculiar organism to a wider audience, promote its conservation efforts, but also increase awareness of the detrimental effects of overharvesting on the nautilus, along with other organisms.”

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