The chromosomes of three commercially important species of veneroid bivalves were studied: Cerastoderma edule (Cardiidae), Venerupis pullastra and Venerupis rhomboïdes (Veneridae, Tapetinae) using conventional Giemsa staining and morphometric measurements. C. edule showed a diploid chromosome number of 2n=38 and a variable occurrence of supernumerary chromosomes. Its karyotype consists of 12 submetacentric, 4 subtelocentric and 3 telocentric chromosome pairs. The supernumerary chromosomes were easily distinguished by their reduced differentiated size and by their intra and inter-individual variability. C. edule is the first bivalve species where supernumerary chromosomes have been observed. V. pullastra had 2n = 38 with a karyotype including 3 metacentric, 8 submetacentric and 8 subtelocentric chromosome pairs. V. rhomboïdes had 2n = 38 with a karyotype including 4 metacentric, 8 submetacentric, 4 subtelocentric and 3 telocentric chromosome pairs. Cytotaxonomic relationships are proposed within Tapetinae from comparative analysis of karyotypes of two species studied here and three other species of the same subfamily previously studied.

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