



Mud Snail

Local Biodiversity Action Plan

MUD SNAIL (OMPHISCOLA GLABRA)

Associated Habitat Action Plans:

Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, Ponds



Ecology

Appearance

Mud snails can grow up to 20mm in length and are dark grey in colour.

Habitat

Mud snails are typically found in soft, nutrient poor waters with few other aquatic animals or plants. These include freshwater marshes, small ditches, temporary pools or seepages that dry up or significantly diminish in summer. These water-bodies are challenging habitats, which in the past were regarded as inferior wildlife habitats and were typically converted into productive agricultural land or improved visually for landscape reasons. Occasionally this species is found in larger water bodies such as swampy drainage dykes and permanent ponds. This species is most often found on coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and ponds.

Food

The mud snail eats mainly diatoms, bacteria and other micro-organisms. They will often also eat



Mud Snail

Local Biodiversity Action Plan

aquatic plants. Quite quickly a new growth of micro-organisms appears that they are able to eat.

Life Style

When pools recede or dry out, mud snails will burrow into the exposed mud and become dormant or aestivate (usually around 1-6cm into the mud).

The mud snail is never found where there are high diversity of other snail species.

Current status

The mud snail (*Lymnaea glabra*) is a west European species of local distribution. In Britain it was formerly fairly widely distributed throughout the acidic lowland areas of England, Wales and Scotland as far as Perth. It is now rare, with the largest concentration of records coming from the southern part of the Vale of York.

This species has become extinct over large parts of lowland England and shows continuing decline. A three year survey (1995/6/7) of 370 ponds in the Cheshire region found the mud snail to be present in only three ponds. (Pond Critical Biodiversity Survey: 1997).

The mud snail is listed as vulnerable (RDB 2) in the British Red Data Book; a category for taxa believed likely to move into the Endangered category if the causal factors continue operating.

In 2007, the Mud Snail was added to the UKBAP priority list.

Threats

- * Drainage or dredging of wetlands, ditches, ponds and seasonal pools.
- * Ploughing and other agricultural practices leading to chemical or organic enrichment causing eutrophication of water bodies through leaching and run-off.
- * Inappropriate management, such as is frequently carried out in the name of 'conservation' for the benefit of more common aquatic species.
- * Fragmentation of habitat, thus decreasing or preventing colonisation or re-colonisation.

How are we helping to conserve Mud Snails in the Cheshire region?

- * Drainage or dredging of wetlands, ditches, ponds and seasonal pools.



- * Ploughing and other agricultural practices leading to chemical or organic enrichment causing eutrophication of water bodies through leaching and run-off.
- * Inappropriate management, such as is frequently carried out in the name of 'conservation' for the benefit of more common aquatic species.
- * Fragmentation of habitat, thus decreasing or preventing colonisation or re-colonisation.

Objectives, targets and actions

- * Drainage or dredging of wetlands, ditches, ponds and seasonal pools.
- * Ploughing and other agricultural practices leading to chemical or organic enrichment causing eutrophication of water bodies through leaching and run-off.
- * Inappropriate management, such as is frequently carried out in the name of 'conservation' for the benefit of more common aquatic species.
- * Fragmentation of habitat, thus decreasing or preventing colonisation or re-colonisation.

How to find out more about Mud Snails

Contact Mike Tynen, Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

Contact details

LBAP Chair Mike Tynen, Cheshire Wildlife Trust

.

References and Glossary

JNCC (1991): British Red Data Book 3, Invertebrates other than insects.

HMSO (1995): The U.K. Steering Group Report, Volume 1.

Kerney (1976): Atlas of the non-marine mollusca of the British Isles

