

Non-Marine Recorder's Report 2018

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The shared experiences of 2018 included a freezing spell in spring and a long dry summer, neither of which is usually associated with malacological plenty. I certainly received fewer complaints from gardeners than in a typical growing season! Nonetheless, the Society received a large number of records, including several surprises, in the period since the last Report (Norris, 2018). My first year as recorder also saw me get to grips with the JNCC Recorder 6 software in which the Society's data are held, and the ways in which data flow in and out.

Activity

Over the period 27 March 2018- 13 December 2018 a total of 5907 records were entered into the Recorder 6 database. The majority were observations made in 2017 or 2018 and came from over 60 vice-counties in Scotland, Northern Ireland, England, and Wales; a few records were also received from the Republic of Ireland. Some substantial work on datasets from the Channel Islands has been done by Chris du Feu, and will be reported upon elsewhere.

At the time of writing, the Society's main dataset has been exported and submitted to the NBN, to be updated on the NBN Atlas (<https://nbnatlas.org/>) shortly. For those interested, the details of the Society's different contributions to the NBN can be viewed here:

<https://registry.nbnatlas.org/public/show/dp117>.

As Recorder I also took over as a designated Verifier for non-marine molluscs on the Biological Records Centre's iRecord platform (<https://www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/>). On iRecord I verified approximately 2500 additional records (the overlap with directly submitted data being very small), again from throughout the UK. I thank Roy Anderson and Martin Willing and for their assistance with a few referrals, while Chris du Feu has gone on to verify a number of additional slug records. The total accounts for nearly all observations made in 2017 or 2018 and clears a backlog for dozens of contributors, both Society members and potential members, whose submissions had been awaiting verification. iRecord is a very easy-to-use tool for submitting records from mobile devices as well as desktops and is likely to become even more popular in future. Though not perfect, its advantages include controls on taxon names and localities that can limit typographical errors, and the ease with which photographs can be attached. Around 30% of records had photographs which are very useful for verification and any subsequent correspondence with the submitter. Going through the 2017-2018 tranche of data allowed an estimate of likely identification error rates (5-15%), and gives an insight into which species are most commonly recorded (or mis-recorded). Some of these matters were discussed at Council at the December meeting. My aim is to import all Accepted records (i.e., only those considered correct by a Verifier) into Recorder 6 via the Indicia2Recorder plugin. This is a model followed by the Marine Recorder and several other UK Recording Schemes. At the time of writing, technical issues have prevented this being completed, but this is expected to be resolved soon.

Being a submission tool, iRecord should not be confused with Facebook and other social media on which sightings are discussed, but the records are not automatically captured by the Society. Ian Smith and others continue to do a sterling job at encouraging members of the Facebook group "Slugs and Snails of the British Isles" to submit interesting records directly to the Society or via

iRecord. The majority of the noteworthy records discussed below are supported by voucher specimens examined by myself.

Highlights

Among the records received were at least six new vice-county records. Three were of snail species: *Paralaoma servilis*, Norwich, East Norfolk (VC27), 25/4/2018, Jake Stone; *Helix lucorum* Sapperton, East Gloucestershire (VC33), 28/8/2018, Joff Elphick; *Aplexa hypnorum* Threave, Kirkcudbrightshire (VC73), 15/5/2017, Clive Walton (a VC record not previously highlighted). Another three were of slugs: *Arion fuscus* Elvedon, West Suffolk (VC26), 25/11/2015, Chris du Feu (determined from a preserved specimen); *Arion owenii* Leicestershire (VC55), 14/9/2018, Dave Nicholls; and *Ambigolimax nyctelius* Brierfield, South Lancashire (VC 59), 17/10/2018, Alex Whitlock. Of these, *Aplexa hypnorum* is the only native species. The others are introductions and with the possible exception of *Arion fuscus*, are already known to be spreading.

The period also saw yet more detections of species not previously known in the fauna. Dead shells of the operculate *Cochlostoma septemspirale* (Razoumowsky) were found in mixed sycamore woodland on chalky soil near Lewes, East Sussex (VC14) by David Adams (an adult in November 2017 and an apical fragment in August 2018). It is not certain whether this southern European species was living or is established at the site. Dioecious snails like *Cochlostoma* may well be less likely to found new populations than those pulmonates capable of self-fertilisation.

Definitely alive, but so far represented by a single individual, was a milacid slug found by Jake Stone at Banham Zoo, East Norfolk (VC27) in April 2018. This small, extremely dark animal immediately raised suspicions of *Milax nigricans* (Philippi), a species once found near Bexhill, Sussex by H. E. Quick in 1948 but excluded from later British lists (Anderson, 2008). However the genitalia did not match those of any British milacid species and were closer to *Tandonia* than *Milax*. One possibility, awaiting further material and confirmation by DNA sequencing, is *Tandonia retowskii* Boettger (syn. *T. kaleniczenkoi* Clessin). This species hails from Crimea, a region from which a number of other recently detected mollusc species were first found. As always, unusual-looking slug populations, including those in exotic or ornamental habitats, can be worth examining carefully.

The most spectacular – and perhaps alarming – find this year must be the species rejoicing in the name of “Chinese Mystery Snail”. When searching a ditch in the Pevensey Levels, East Sussex (VC14) Evan Jones was amazed to find several living adults of a huge, dark green viviparid snail. There are no records of *Viviparus* itself from the well-studied Pevensey area. Instead, this species proved to be either *Cipangopaludina chinensis* (Gray, 1833) or *C. malleata* (Reeve, 1863), a taxon native to SE Asia but known from North America and the Netherlands as an introduction. *Cipangopaludina* is sometimes kept in the aquarium trade (I should be interested to hear if any member has ever seen it for sale in the UK). The Pevensey population is likely to have been dumped from an aquarium, other cases of which are documented in the Sussex area. Given its position in a conservation area and its history as an invasive elsewhere, Martin Willing and I reported the finding to the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat. Additional details of the find are given by Willing (2018) and a wider survey of the area is planned. Please do alert the Society to any other finds of this species. Personally, as it is at present only known from a single ditch, I think careful eradication should be considered in this instance.

Finally, in the October 2018 issue of the *Journal of Conchology*, Roy Anderson and colleagues report yet another alien snail, this one established near the docks at Tilbury, Essex. This opportunity is taken to reprint in colour the authors’ comparative plate of the south-eastern European *Monacha*

ocellata (Roth) with the other two British *Monacha* species. Each was itself an introduction from continental Europe that became widespread; although each had a different history, and sometimes even a helping hand (e.g. Sumner, 2018).

Acknowledgements

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References

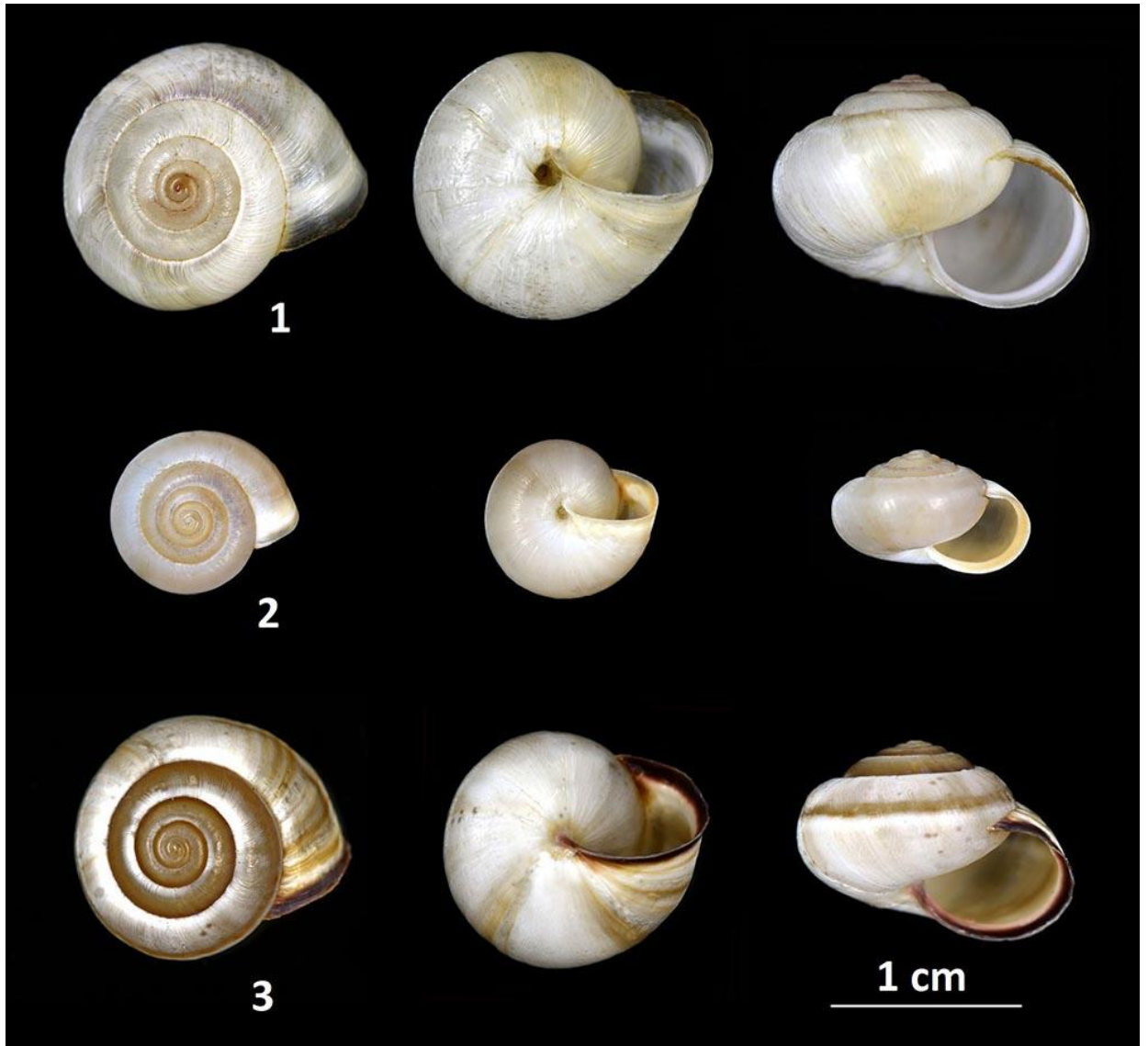
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Cochlostoma septemspirale (Razoumowsky) from woodland near Lewes, Sussex; leg. David Adams.
Note operculum visible from an oblique angle.



Cipangopaludina chinensis (Gray) found alive in a ditch on the Pevensey Levels, Sussex, leg. Evan Jones. Photo by Evan Jones.



British *Monacha* species (reproduced, with permission from Anderson et al., 2018): **1** *M. cantiana*, Luton Airport, 6th July 2003, coll. R. Anderson; **2** *M. cartusiana*, Dover, 1899, coll. A.G. Stubbs (Ulster Museum accession Mn3201); **3** *M. ocellata*, near Tilbury, 4th August 2017, coll. M. G. Telfer.