

Virginia Land Snails

Gastrocopta tappaniana (C.B. Adams, 1842)

Family: Vertiginidae

Identification

Height: ~2.1 mm

Width: ~1.3 mm

Whorls: 4

Gastrocopta tappaniana and its cousin *Gastrocopta pentodon* differ from all other Virginia pupillid land snails by having a white-clear shell with a simple, peg-shaped angulo-parietal lamella at the top of the aperture. It can be separated from *G. pentodon* by its fatter shape, with a height/width ratio of more than 1.5. It also consistently occurs in wetter habitats.

Ecology

Gastrocopta tappaniana is found in accumulations of decomposing leaf litter in wooded and open wetland habitats such as riparian, floodplain and swamp woodlands, mesic and wet prairies, open shoreline bedrock outcrops, fens, pocosins, and *Sphagnum* bogs.

Taxonomy

While some authors have suggested that this taxon is an ecophenotypic variant of *G. pentodon* (e.g., Bequaert and Miller 1973), statistical analysis of shells in museum collections (Pearce et al., 2007) and of DNA sequences (Nekola et al., 2012) confirms that these two species are highly distinct.

Synonyms for this animal's name include: *Pupa tappaniana*, *Pupa pentodon* form *ovata*.

Distribution

This animal ranges from central Arizona and southeastern New Mexico, Kansas, and eastern South Dakota, north to central Alberta and Manitoba, northern Ontario, and east to southern Florida and eastern Quebec (Pilsbry, 1948; Nekola & Coles, 2010).

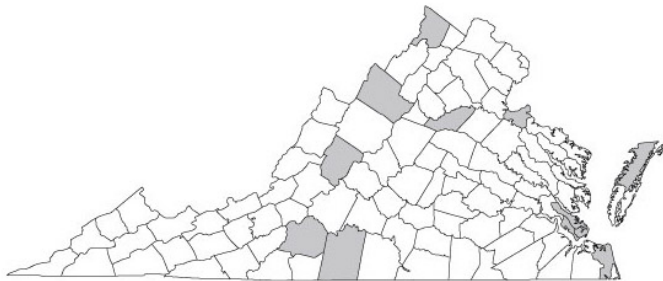
In Virginia this species is currently reported from only scattered locations in central and eastern parts of the state. However, based on its range in surrounding states it is to be expected from across the entire state in its favored wetland habitats.

NatureServe Global Rank: G5

NatureServe State Rank: S3

Jeff Nekola 9/2012

Range Map



Photo(s): *Gastrocopta tappaniana* shell
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