

Virginia Land Snails

Philomycus togatus (Gould, 1841)

Family: Philomycidae
Common name: Toga Mantleslug

Identification

Length: 50-80 mm

Philomycus togatus is a large slug with a mantle that covers the entire dorsal surface. The mantle is tan to tan-grey and usually mottled with small spots of darker brown. These spots usually coalesce to form a central band and two bands running along the lateral edge of each side of the mantle. However, mantle color pattern is highly variable in this species. Some individuals lack the small darker spots and are uniform tan or grey. The reproductive system is equipped with a dart sac containing a short wide dart.

Ecology

This species is common in upland hardwood forests from the piedmont to about 1200 meters (4,000 feet) in the Appalachian Mountains. They are often observed feeding on fungi and lichens at night and during wet weather, and they aestivate under loose bark and rotting logs. These slugs produce yellow to orange defense mucous when irritated.

Taxonomy

Unpublished DNA sequence data suggests that *Philomycus batchi* Branson, 1968 and *Philomycus bisdosus* Branson, 1968 are synonyms of *Philomycus togatus* (Gould, 1840). This complex requires further taxonomic work to clarify species relationships.

Distribution

Philomycus togatus is distributed from Maine to northeastern Alabama with a disjunct population in southern Mississippi and Louisiana. In Virginia the species is primarily found on the Piedmont and Ridge and Valley.

NatureServe Global Rank: G5
NatureServe State Rank: S4

John Slapcinsky 10/2012

Range Map



Photo(s): *Philomycus togatus* by Ron Lutz II ©.

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