

Virginia Land Snails

Vertigo gouldii (A. Binney, 1843)

Family: Vertiginidae
Common name: Variable Vertigo

Identification

Height: ~1.9 mm
Width: ~1.0 mm
Whorls: 5

Vertigo gouldii is perhaps the most commonly encountered *Vertigo* in Virginia. It has a delicate, brownish, pupa-shaped shell with five "teeth" in the aperture. It shares with *Vertigo bollesiana* and *Vertigo cristata* a striate shell surface. It differs from *V. bollesiana* by having stronger striae and by lacking a deep depression on the outer shell surface over the palatal lamellae.

This species differs from *V. cristata* by having coarser and more irregular striae, by lacking a sharp crest, and by possessing a basal lamella. Additionally, the parietal lamella in *V. gouldii* is pointed at the upper palatal lamella. Small shells from the southern Appalachians and Ozarks that have somewhat smoother shells and weaker teeth than typical northeastern USA material have often been misidentified as *Vertigo bollesiana* (Nekola & Coles, 2010).

Ecology

Individuals are most abundantly encountered in well-decomposed leaf litter on shaded calcareous cliff ledges and bases, and on the top of large rocks. They also occur in lower numbers throughout upland and lowland forest, and may be occasionally seen crawling on cliff faces (Nekola & Coles, 2010).

Taxonomy

Synonyms for this animal's name include *Pupa gouldii* and *Vertigo gouldi*.

Distribution

Vertigo gouldii ranges across east-central North America from the Ozarks and northwestern Minnesota, east across southern Ontario and Quebec to northern Maine, and south to the outer coastal plain of North Carolina, and the mountains of northern Alabama.

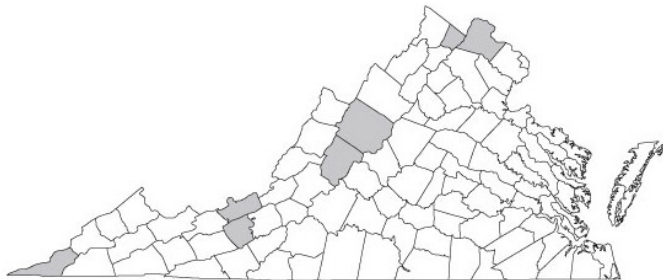
In Virginia, this species is currently reported only from the western mountains. However, given its presence on the North Carolina coast, it may be expected in calcareous habitats throughout the state.

NatureServe Global Rank: G5

NatureServe State Rank: S3

Jeff Nekola 9/2012

Range Map



Photo(s): Two *Vertigo gouldii* shells demonstrating the variation in this species by Jeff Nekola ©.

[Click photo\(s\) to enlarge.](#)