Hebetancylus excentricus (Morelet 1851)

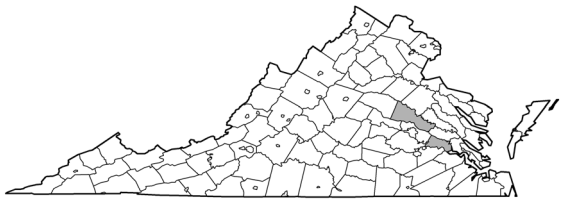
excentric ancylid

Taxonomy & Systematics. The Ancylidae is a small family of small basommatophoran pulmonates, including several dozen species in 6-8 genera worldwide. They are (at least embryonically) sinistral, although their direction of shell coil tends to be obscured by the cap-like or limpet shape of their shells. The gill has been lost, leaving respiration to occur across the entire mantle cavity, as is true for pulmonates in general. But ancylids do not rise to breathe at the surface; their mantle cavity being filled with water throughout their lives. Thus unlike most pulmonates, they are not especially well-adapted for warm or stagnant waters. Ancylids are hermaphroditic, as again is true for pulmonates in general; often apparently self-fertilizing. They lay eggs in singletons or small clusters with little matrix.

The presence of an apex distinctly off midline is generally considered a diagnostic character for this species. McMahon reported, however, that shell shape varied to such an extent in one Oklahoma population of limpets that no positive assignment could be made between *Hebetancylus* and *Laevapex*.

Habitat & Distribution. *Hebetancylus excentricus* is a more southern species, Basch giving its American range as Georgia, Florida and Texas only. It was first reported in South Carolina in 1989. Here we extend the range of *H. excentricus* to include spotty records from ponds and river backwaters up the length of the southern Atlantic Coastal Plain into Virginia. *Hebetancylus* populations can become locally abundant on submerged sticks, logs, and large items of organic debris. Such a contagious distribution suggests dispersal by migratory waterfowl.

Ecology & Life History. A great variety of life cycles have been documented in Louisiana populations of *Hebetancylus*, including simple annual reproduction, two generations per year, and even three. Harrison reported that some of the individuals he collected from his South Carolina population were septate, suggesting that they may have passed a period of dry or otherwise harsh environmental condition in aestivation.



Conservation Status. NatureServe G5/SNR - Secure/Not assessed.

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