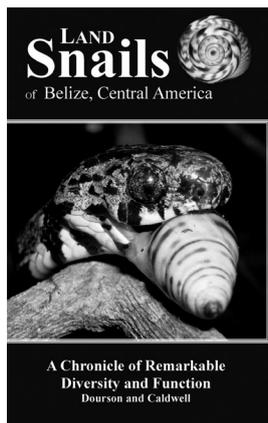


## Book review

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Cover of 'official' version

DOURSON, D.T., CALDWELL, R.S. & DOURSON, J.A., 2018a. Land snails of Belize, Central America. A chronicle of remarkable diversity and function: 1-338. Goatslug Publications, Stanton KY, U.S.A. ['unofficial' first version; 10 January 2018]

DOURSON, D.T., CALDWELL, R.S. & DOURSON, J.A., 2018b. Land snails of Belize, Central America. A chronicle of remarkable diversity and function: 1-339. Goatslug Publications, Stanton KY, U.S.A. ISBN 9780999802311, price \$ 50 / € 69 net. ['official' version; 21 December 2018]

ily on the first page of a chapter and guides the reader to the pages where the species are treated. For each species a vernacular and the scientific name is given, the dimensions, a description with the most characteristic features underlined, differences with similar species, habitat, status, where the specimens are found (with a distribution map) and the type locality. For disc-shaped shells usually three standard views and for conical shells two standard views are provided, with additional views showing unusual or interesting features. Seventeen new species are described in the book, and the total number of species reported from this country has grown from 24 (Thompson's checklist) to 158 native species. One new species is peculiar: *Lucidella caldwelli*. Since authorship has not been restricted, Caldwell is co-author of his own eponym! The authors have spent ten years of field work for this book and some new species have already been described in previous years. This is also reflected in the ample attention that is given to ecological data; the photographs of predation on snails by carnivore species and snakes are often stunning and unique.

The first version of this book (Dourson et al., 2018a), having a completely different cover, was unintentionally published while the authors were still updating the text on the basis of reviews they had asked to specialists. Nevertheless, the book was distributed by several commercial companies, and the new species descriptions are thus validly available according to the International Code on Zoological Nomenclature. This date was 10 January 2018; the final, 'official' version (Dourson et al., 2018b) came out just before Christmas on 21 December (Dourson, personal communication).

The 'unofficial' first version was based on old classifications for several families (e.g., Orthalicidae contained both *Orthalicus* [Orthalicidae] and *Bulimulus* and *Drymaeus* [Bulimulidae]; no distinction was being made between Urocoptidae and Epirobiidae; Subulinidae were not included in Achatinidae). The classification of Ampulariidae is not in accordance with the authoritative work of Cowie on this group. In June 2018, after receiving a further draft of the book, I sent a long list with additional comments to the authors. Thus it is regrettable that this version was published at all, although it will be a collector's item for bibliophiles. Unfortunately part of the suggested

Few years ago, the now late Fred G. Thompson published a checklist on Central American non-marine snails (Thompson, 2011). It was based on his life-long experience in the field and his extensive collection in the Florida Museum of Natural History. Such a checklist, without illustration, is very useful for a scientific audience but less so for a more general public. For the latter no suitable publications exist on this area. The book of Dourson et al., albeit limited to Belize, is thus an interesting publication.

The book has 15 chapters, of which the first four give a general introduction on the area, the value of land snails in ecosystems, and on the collecting and identification of snails. The next eight chapters deal with land snails arranged according to size and shape, while one chapter is devoted to cave-dwelling species. Two chapters deal with slugs respectively freshwater snails, while the last chapter is devoted to exotic land snails in Belize. A glossary, bibliography and indices conclude the book. The book has many good-quality photographs of shells, living snails and habitats, with distribution maps and some cartoons.

The choice to treat the species in chapters according to size (smaller or greater than 5 mm) and shape (wider than tall and various elongated shapes) works very well to group the shells into families. A typical example illustrates a fam-

corrections were not applied (e.g., p. 11: Morlet's crocodile should be Morelet's crocodile; p. 26: the 'escargot' of the French is not *Cornu aspersum* but *Helix pomatia*; p. 227: the correct name for the species is *Brachypodella speluncae* (L. Pfeiffer, 1852), and the syntype figured on p. 226 is *Cylindrella costulata* Morelet, 1851 [Pfeiffer's name being a replacement name for this junior homonym]). Some figures have been updated (but none of the figures are numbered, which makes referring difficult), and the list of references is somewhat extended but still contains typos and flaws, while recent literature on several groups are missing. In addition, the above mentioned outdated classifications have not been replaced in the new version. Thus this final version contains several errors (the authors also have missed a chance to correct some errors in Thompson's checklist) and is not up-to-date.

This book is, also taking these final remarks into account, an extremely nice addition to the literature on the Neotropical malacofauna, despite the relatively small area of the country. The way the information is presented in the book makes it easily accessible to the non-specialised reader and hopefully it will stimulate the interest in the study of land snails, not only in Belize, but also in Mexico and other Central American countries.

#### Reference

THOMPSON, F.G., 2011. An annotated checklist and bibliography of the land and freshwater snails of México and Central America. — Bulletin Florida Museum of Natural History 50 (1): 1-299.