

Cochlicopa lubricella and Helix aspersa as alien land snails
(Gastropoda, Pulmonata) in Zimbabwe/Rhodesia

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Two Holarctic species of *Cochlicopa* Risso, 1826, viz., *C. lubricella* (Porro, 1838) and *C. lubrica* (Müller, 1774), have been repeatedly recorded from southern Africa (Van Bruggen, 1967, 1980). A new record shows the first of these species to expand its distribution rapidly, although both are fortunately still restricted to the urban centres.

Recently one of our correspondents, Mrs. Cécile Granville of Schagen (Transvaal), submitted another sample for identification, this time from Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia). The material was obtained in October 1980 in an old, well established garden at 35 Arundel School Road in Mount Pleasant, a northern residential suburb of Salisbury, by Mrs. Jennifer A. Conway: '... she found them in a few minutes all in a clump and wondered if they were mating or just newly hatched.' (Mrs. C. Granville, in litt. 22.X.1980). The sample, preserved in alcohol in the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie (Leiden), consists of 38 specimens, a proportion of which are juvenile (smallest shell 3.2 mm long with ca. 3½ whorls). This proves that here we have to do with a vigorous and healthy, reproducing population. Snail control measures aimed at *Helix aspersa* (see below) in the form of the usual snail bait may have had some effect though.

The largest specimen and eleven randomly selected adult shells were measured; the ratio length/major diameter (l/d) was calculated from micrometer readings.

5.4 x 2.1 mm, l/d 2.54	4.9 x 2.1 mm, l/d 2.32
5.4 x 2.1 mm, l/d 2.61	4.9 x 2.1 mm, l/d 2.39
5.3 x 2.2 mm, l/d 2.36	4.9 x 2.1 mm, l/d 2.39
5.2 x 2.1 mm, l/d 2.55	4.9 x 2.1 mm, l/d 2.38
5.1 x 2.2 mm, l/d 2.34	4.9 x 2.1 mm, l/d 2.38
5.1 x 2.1 mm, l/d 2.45	4.9 x 2.0 mm, l/d 2.45
range 4.9-5.4 x 2.0-2.2 mm, l/d 2.32-2.61, all ca. 5½ whorls	
mean 5.1 x 2.1 mm, l/d 2.46; average 5.1 x 2.1 mm, l/d 2.43	

According to the generally accepted criteria (see Gittenberger, Backhuys & Ripken, 1970; Kerney & Cameron, 1979, 1980) the above population should be classified with *C. lubricella*. Compared to the numerical data given in the literature (op. cit.) the material represents a population with fairly small and narrow shells with an l/d close to the mean for the species.

Earlier southern African data indicate that populations from Bryanston have even smaller and narrower shells with approximately the same l/d, while Grahamstown material has somewhat larger shells with a smaller major diameter, resulting in slender specimens with a high l/d (Van Bruggen, 1980).

As regards distribution in southern Africa, the situation is now as follows: *C. lubricella*

- Grahamstown (Cape Province, 1965), Bryanston (Transvaal, 1977), Salisbury (Zimbabwe, 1980); *C. lubrica* - Northcliff, Johannesburg (Transvaal, 1978). All localities are urban centres with plenty of cultivated garden plants from or obtained via Europe (particularly Britain, where both *Cochlicopa* species are widely distributed). The species have been well figured by Gittenberger, Backhuys & Ripken (1970), Kerney & Cameron (1979, 1980) and Van Bruggen (1980).

In correspondence with Mrs. Conway on the above gastropods, my attention was drawn to the remark 'We have a garden problem with snails...' (in litt. 20.III.1981). To the present author's knowledge *Helix aspersa* Müller, 1774, has not yet been recorded from Zimbabwe in the malacological literature; a voucher specimen from the above-described Salisbury garden has been deposited in the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie. This helicid is a common garden pest in many areas of southern Africa, obviously always having been part and parcel of the white man's burden. The species is too well-known to warrant description or illustration (see Gittenberger, Backhuys & Ripken, 1970; Kerney & Cameron, 1979, 1980).

Fortunately the list of land molluscs introduced into Zimbabwe is still very restricted: *Cochlicopa lubricella*, *Oxychilus cellarius* (Müll.), *Subulina octona* (Brug.), and *Helix aspersa* (vide Van Bruggen, 1964). *Oxychilus cellarius* and *Subulina octona* are even pre-World War II records. The terrestrial molluscs of this country are very poorly known and many novelties are still to be discovered, probably also among the alien snails.

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