

***Achatina fulica* in Morocco, North Africa**

A.C. VAN BRUGGEN

Systematic Zoology Section, Leiden University, c/o Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie,
P.O. Box 9517, 2300 RA Leiden, the Netherlands

A shell of *Achatina fulica* has been collected in Morocco (North Africa) in the Atlas Mountains. Although bleached it contained an egg. The shell may have reached Morocco accidentally or may represent a resident population—it is the first record of the species for the Palearctic Region.

Key words: Gastropoda, Pulmonata, Achatinidae, *Achatina fulica*, zoogeography, Morocco.

The originally East African achatinid species *Achatina fulica* Bowdich, 1822, has been widely dispersed by man, mainly in the tropics of Australasia (Mead, 1961, 1979). However, little attention has been paid to distribution in Africa outside its normal range.

Recently Mrs. C.G. Veder-Ruys (Rotterdam), gave me a shell she had picked up in Morocco, 40-50 km E. of Taroudannt (30°31'N 8°55'W) on the road to Marrakech, on a south slope in the Atlas Mountains, on 8 January 1983. To my surprise and dismay this appears to be a specimen of *A. fulica*. There can be no doubt as regards its identity, which, moreover, was confirmed by Prof. A.R. Mead of the University of Arizona, Tucson, U.S.A. The somewhat worn and bleached specimen (now in the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden) measures 82 × 44 mm (apex and lower lip damaged) and is in all respects typical of the species. The shell appeared to contain an egg, unfortunately now accidentally destroyed.

Obviously the specimen was picked up as an empty shell of which the occupant had died some, perhaps considerable, time ago. Has the species gained a foothold in Morocco? Or was the shell transported by man (from where)? These questions have to remain unanswered until more evidence turns up. Anyway, the finding of a shell of *A. fulica* in Morocco is put on record here for the first time; zoogeographically Morocco is considered to be part of the Palearctic Region, so that the present record is the first one for this Region.

REFERENCES

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