

## Achatina fulica in West Africa

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Specimens of the giant African snail *Achatina fulica* Bowdich were collected alive in 1987 at Adièpo-Doumé, Côte d'Ivoire. This appears to be the first West African record of the species, which is an agricultural pest in many areas outside its original East African range.

Key words: Gastropoda, Pulmonata, Achatinidae, *Achatina fulica*, distribution, West Africa, Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Sicco Ens (Bennekom) has provided me with a number of land snails, collected in the autumn of 1987 from the garden of the "Centre Néerlandais" at the ORSTOM institute at Adièpo-Doumé near Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Among these were both adult and juvenile specimens of an *Achatina*, which I failed to identify with any of the West African species. Study of the genitalia revealed that these very well match the description and figures of *Achatina fulica* Bowdich, 1822, provided by Mead (1950). For zoogeographical reasons I had not considered this species in the first place. The identification was kindly confirmed conchologically by Dr. A.C. van Bruggen (Leiden). The largest specimen measures 81 × 42 mm with 7 whorls.

It seems likely that the species is a recent introduction. Earlier collections of achatinids from the same locality provided by Mr. Tom Bongers (1979) and Mrs. Gaby Schmelzer (1986) only contained autochthonous species like *Limicolaria aurora* (Jay, 1839), *L. cf. flammula* (Müller, 1774), *Lignus cf. onager* (Shuttleworth, 1856), *Archachatina ventricosa* (Gould, 1856) and *Achatina achatina* (L., 1758). As the garden of ORSTOM is situated next to more or less undisturbed forest remnants, it has to be feared that *A. fulica* will become a permanent member of the West African fauna, in view of its apparent adaptive capacities in other areas. The species is of East African origin, but has spread into many parts of the Pacific and tropical Asia, where it has become an agricultural pest (Mead, 1979).

To my knowledge this is the first West African record. Recently an empty shell was reported from Morocco (Van Bruggen, 1987).

Voucher specimens have been deposited in the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden.

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