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Land Snails and Slugs of the Mid-Atlantic and Northeastern United States

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Land Snails

Zonitoides nitidus (Müller, 1774)

Family: Gastrodontidae

Common name: Black Gloss

Identification

Width: 6-8 mm

Height: 3.6-4 mm

Whorls: 4.5-5

The *helicoform* shell of *Zonitoides nitidus* is deep yellowish-brown and *glossy, semi-transparent*, with well-impressed sutures. The shell is umbilicate, with a simple, thin peristome and lunate aperture lacking teeth at any stage of growth. The embryonic whorl is smooth with the other whorls having finely, weakly marked transverse striae. Spiral striae are not present. The shell is a bit bigger and rounder with a larger aperture than its close relative *Z. arboreus*. The live animal's body is black, making the shells of live specimens appear quite dark. There is a characteristic muted-orange spot on the mantle near the lip of the shell.

Ecology

This somewhat amphibious species is generally found on floodplains, streamsides, and in wetlands. In Maine it was present in a variety of wetlands, from acid bog to rich shrub swamp (Nekola, 2008). Its distribution can be quite patchy. *Zonitoides nitidus* feeds upon rotting vegetation, fungi and fruit (Müller, 1774, *in* AnimalBase, 2017). In Europe it may lay up to 30 eggs (Gassies, 1849 *in* AnimalBase, 2017).

Taxonomy

Originally described as *Helix nitida* by Müller in 1774, Binney later named it *Zonites nitidus* in 1878. In 1905, Dall gave it the present name of *Zonitoides nitidus*. *Helix hydrophyla* and *H. hydrophila* were synonymized with *Z. nitidus* by Pilsbry (1946).

Distribution

Zonitoides nitidus is Holarctic, distributed in the higher latitudes of the northern hemisphere. In North America, *Z. nitidus* has been documented in Canada, Alaska, and as far west as California, Utah, British Columbia, and Washington. In the Northeastern United States, *Z. nitidus* is found from northern West Virginia and Maryland north to Maine.

Conservation

NatureServe Rank: G5 apparently secure. This species is widespread, albeit patchily distributed, in most of the Northeast Region.

Ken Hotopp, Dan Dourson 6/2017



Photo(s): Views of a Zonitoides nitidus shell

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