

1. Current status

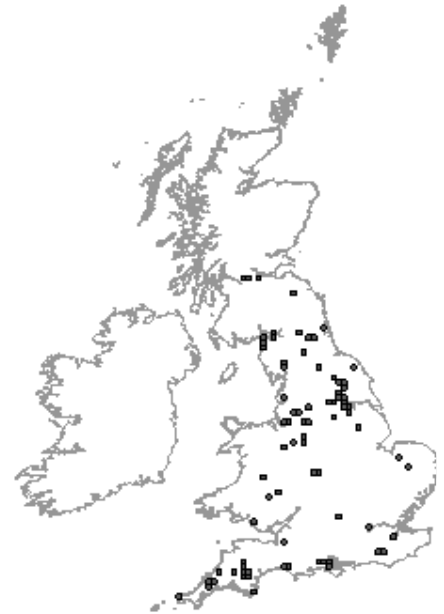
The Pond Mud Snail (*Omphiscola glabra*) is a rare and declining wetland mollusc. Historically, this species was widespread throughout lowland areas of England and Wales. Although possibly under-recorded, it is thought that this species has undergone a marked decline in the last 50 years and it is now classified as vulnerable (IUCN).



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Reproduced from the NBN, records from 1988 - present

Current distribution of Pond Mud Snail in the UK

2. Habitat requirements

The Pond Mud Snail is typically found in clean, nutrient poor waters. These include freshwater marshes, including amongst shallowly flooded tussocks of purple moor grass, *Molinia caerulea*, small ditches, temporary pools or seepages and track-ruts. These habitats dry up or significantly diminish in summer. When pools dry out in summer the snails may be difficult to locate as they burrow into the exposed soft mud and become dormant (aestivate) at a depth of 1-6cm. Occasionally Pond Mud Snail are found in larger water bodies such as swampy drainage dykes and permanent ponds, but only those with low nutrient levels.



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3. Threats

- Declines in water quality from pollution (e.g. from agricultural run-off)
- Improvements in field drainage destroying boggy areas
- Loss of small ponds and wetlands
- Habitat fragmentation
- Dredging shallow and seasonal ponds to deepen them
- Lack of grazing and poaching by livestock in ponds and marshes

Contact your Regional Officer, or the PPW Office

E: Peoplepondswater@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk

T: 01865 595502

PondNet is one of three projects within Freshwater Habitats Trust, People, Ponds and Water Project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund

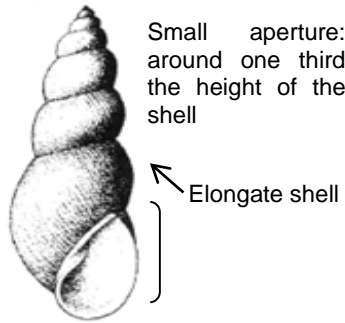
Visit the webpage for more information: www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/projects/pondnet



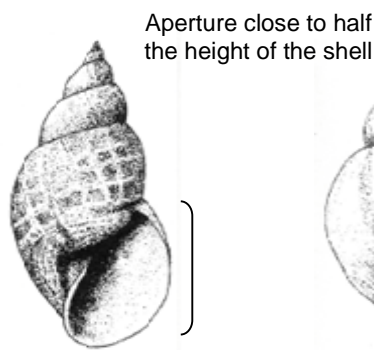
4. Identification

Adult Pond Mud Snail are typically 14-25mm in length. They have a smaller aperture than most similarly-sized water snail, i.e. aperture is 1/3 of the total height of the shell. The shape of the adult snail shell is distinctive, but juveniles can be confused with young Marsh Snail, *Lymnaea palustris*, and Dwarf Pond Snail, *Galba truncatula*, although these will still have a larger aperture in relation to overall height (i.e. aperture is 1/2 the total height of the shell). Pond Mud Snail also looks similar to Moss Bladder Snail, *Aplexa hypnorum*, and they often inhabit the same ponds. However Moss Bladder Snail is very shiny and its aperture, when facing you, opens on the left side of the shell (sinistral).

Pond Mud Snail
Omphiscola glabra



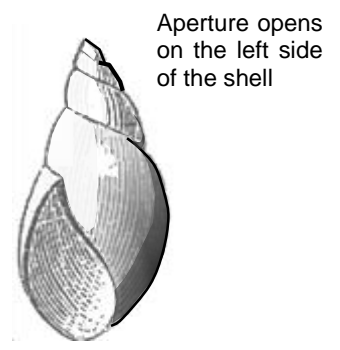
Marsh snail
Lymnaea palustris



Dwarf pond snail
Galba truncatula



Moss bladder snail
Aplexa hypnorum



Species	Length	Breadth	Shell	Aperture
Pond Mud Snail <i>Omphiscola glabra</i>	14 - 25mm	4 - 7mm	Elongate, brown, with very fine longitudinal striations.	Small aperture about one third the height of the shell. Aperture opens to the right.
Marsh snail <i>Lymnaea palustris</i>	19 – 24 mm	8 – 11 mm	Less elongate, whorls rather flattened. Shell thick, usually with strong longitudinal and spiral sculpting, dark reddish brown.	Aperture about half the height of the shell. Lip of the aperture laid back against the body whorl. Aperture opens to the right.
Dwarf pond snail <i>Galba truncatula</i>	8 – 12 mm	4 – 6 mm	Shell less elongate, rather thin shelled, with fine longitudinal striations. Lightish brown in colour.	Aperture about half the height of the shell. Opens to the right.
Moss bladder snail and other physidae <i>Aplexa hypnorum</i>	9 - 15 mm	4 - 6 mm	Glossy, rather translucent and thin shelled.	Aperture opens on the <u>left</u> .

6. Survey method

At each pond, spend 1 minute (net-in-the-water time) sampling for Pond Mud Snail. Divide the one minute equally between the different edge and shallow habitat types you see in the pond (e.g. grassy pond margins, rushes, shaded areas). Thus for 3 habitats you'd sample each for 20 seconds. It's best to further divide the time up into approx. 5 second bursts of netting to make it easier to find them in the tray.

- You can sample for Pond Mud Snail using a strong plastic kitchen sieve. You can also use a standard long handed sampling net with a 0.5mm mesh.
- Fill your tray or bucket with water (before you disturb the pond and make it muddy) and place it at the pond's edge.
- Using the net, sweep vigorously through an area of the pond for 3 - 5 seconds. Ensure you firmly net the bottom of the pond where the snails often sit. But don't dredge up lots of sediment.
- Empty the contents of your net into the tray/bucket of water. Swirl it around a little to help any snails settle to the bottom. Agitate vegetation with your hand to knock off snails clinging there.
- Gradually pour the water back into the pond, also removing vegetation as needed. Take care near to the bottom of the tray (where the snails will be sitting) not to pour out the snails too! If it's muddy, swirl out carefully with a little more water.
- Count any Pond Mud Snails. If there are many individuals e.g. more than 30 per tray, then estimate for the whole habitat if you wish. Note the results on the recording sheet – a total abundance estimate for the pond.
- Return the snails to where they were found. Repeat from other sampling areas until the 1 minute sample is complete.
- Enter your data online or give the form to your regional officer.

7. Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Mike Tynen who's Pond Mud Snail sampling technique we adopted for PondNet.

8. Further reading

Baker, P. An Action Plan for the Pond Mud Snail - *Omphiscola glabra*.

BugLife Pond Mud Snail Species Management sheet at www.buglife.org.uk/sites/default/files/Pond%20mud%20snail_0.pdf

PondNet (People Ponds and Water) ID Pond Mud Snail ID, ecology notes and survey method

at <http://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Surveying-for-mud-snail.pdf>



LOTTERY FUNDED