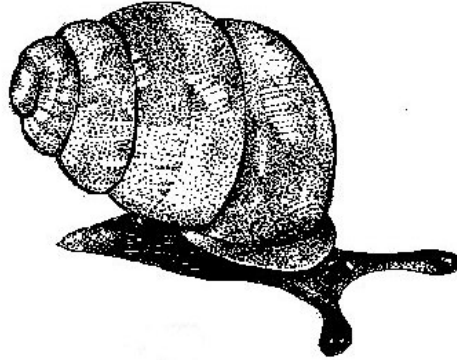


Desmoulins Whorl Snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*)



1 Definition

Desmoulins Whorl Snail is a very small snail, roughly 2.2 – 2.7mm. It lives on tall swamp vegetation in summer such as sedges, reeds and reed sweet grass in wet situations. It is not an aquatic species.

2 Current status

2.1 National

In the UK, *Vertigo moulinsiana* is known from a series of sites stretching from Dorset to Norfolk.

2.2 Local

It is thought that previously *Vertigo moulinsiana* would have been quite widespread due to the evidence of fossil records. In Suffolk found on Whitecast Marsh at Carlton Marshes Reserve and Market Weston Fen.

A large thriving colony was discovered at Market Weston Fen in 1982. Although widespread over an extensive area of the fen, *Vertigo moulinsiana* appears to prefer the beds of saw sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) where it usually lives up on the sedge leaves and stems.

It seems likely that *Vertigo moulinsiana* may have been formerly quite common in the Little Ouse Valley system. It was found at Redgrave and Lopham Fen but the drying of the fen from borehole abstraction has caused disappearance of several wetland snail species.

3 Current factors affecting Desmoulin's Whorl Snail in Suffolk

- The reasons for decline are not clearly understood but the main threats are believed to be destruction of wetlands through changes in hydrological conditions, grazing pressure and physical disturbance.
- Encroachment by scrub leading to over-shading and drying of habitat.
- Over-grazing or cutting resulting in insufficient vegetation. Cutting of long, continuous strips of sedge along riverbanks should be avoided, although the snails will probably tolerate rotational cutting (every 3 years). Excessive riverbank tidying for angling is detrimental.

4 Current Action

4.1 Legal Status

The snail is listed on Annex II of the EC Habitats Directive, and is listed as rare in the GB Red List.

4.2 Management, research and guidance

- *Vertigo moulinsiana* occurs in long established swamps, fens and marshes usually bordering rivers or lakes, living on the stems and leaves of tall grasses, sedges and reeds.
- Management that reduces or eradicates tall grasses and sedges is obviously detrimental, although it can tolerate light grazing by cattle.
- Inhabited plants usually stand in shallow water or damp ground and the snail shuns dry fen. It also has a strong preference for open situations. It has recently been discovered that the snail will occupy and breed readily in translocated and newly created marsh. It is crucial that sites have areas of fen or reed on higher ground to provide refuges when rivers are in flood. Adults floated out of riparian 'hover' during winter flooding do not survive.
- Detailed surveys of the Little Ouse and Waveney valleys were undertaken in 1991.
- Market Weston Fen, Hopton Fen and Whitecast Marshes are all Suffolk Wildlife Trust Reserves and managed to maintain the conditions needed for wetland species.
- The hydrology and fen habitats of Redgrave & Lopham Fen, Suffolk Wildlife Trust Reserve are still responding to the restoration project undertaken as a major partnership project. Conditions may become suitable for *Vertigo moulinsiana*.

5 Action Plan Objectives and Targets

- 1 *Maintain viable populations of snail across its current range.*
- 2 *Survey to determine the full extent of the snail's current distribution and precise habitat requirements.*

6 Desmoulin's Whorl Snail: Proposed Action with Lead Agencies

Action	Date	Partners
POLICY AND LEGISLATION		
Ensure that strategies for floodplain management, strategic plans and policy documents take into account this species habitat requirements.	2004 2005 2006 2007	EA, EN, LAs, Defra
Ensure compliance with Habitats Directive in all development schemes in Suffolk that may affect known sites for Desmoulin's Whorl Snail.	2004 2005 2006 2007	EN, SWT, EA, BA, LAs
Ensure that development schemes in Suffolk do not affect the integrity of Desmoulin's Whorl Snail populations.	2004 2005 2006 2007	EN, LAs, SCC, SWT, EA
SITE SAFEGUARD AND MANAGEMENT		
Seek to ensure that water abstraction policies take account of the need to protect the snail.	2004 2005 2006 2007	EA, EN
Determine the extent of Desmoulin's Whorl Snail within other fenland areas in Suffolk. Identify which fall within protected areas. Survey Redgrave & Lopham Fen reserve.	2004 2005 2006 2007	BAP Wetland Working Group, EA, EN, SBRC, SWT
Ensure the requirements of this species are taken into account when considering any possible extension to the ESA areas. Also consider providing incentives for wetland management under the agri-environment schemes where this species is present.	2004 2005 2006 2007	Defra, FWAG
RESEARCH AND MONITORING		
Make links to national BAP for this species and commission research to identify the species requirement and distribution.	2005 2006 2007	BAP Wetland Working Group

ADVISORY		
Advise landowners on presence and requirements of snail where it is known to occur.	2005 2006 2007	BAP Wetland Working Group, EN, SBRC, SWT, FWAG, IDBs
COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICITY		
Produce positive publicity material to raise awareness of this species in Suffolk.	2004	BAP Wetland Working Group, EA, SWT, SBRC