

Virginia Fringed Mountain Snail

Polygyriscus virginianus

Description

The Virginia fringed mountain snail was originally described in 1947 from weathered shells found in the soil and was presumed to be extinct. It was not until 1971 that live individuals were found. This snail is known only from six miles of bluffs along the New River in Pulaski County Virginia. The shell is a pale greenish color and has four prominent raised spiral lines with less prominent spiral lines between them. The shell is 0.18 inches in diameter and 0.06 inches in height. The animal inside, is white and probably blind.

Life History

This snail is usually in areas where limestone is mixed with clay soil. It is associated with permanently damp rock fragments and angular limestone pieces approximately 0.4 to 4.0 inches across. These areas are heavily shaded and may be overgrown with honeysuckle. Living individuals occur in the soil at depths of four to twenty-four inches. Live snails have never been observed on the soil surface. No other information is available.

Conservation

The Virginia fringed mountain snail was federally listed as an endangered species on July 3, 1978. The Virginia fringed mountain snail is one of the rarest land snails in North America. Four surveys have been done in fifty years and only 27 live snails have been documented. Almost all live snails observed in their natural habitat were found in a single rock pile along a road. Threats include herbicides, fire, widening of the nearby road, and reactivation of a nearby quarry.

What you can do to help

For more information on the Virginia fringed mountain snail, contact the following agencies:

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
P.O. Box 11104
Richmond, Virginia 23230
804/367 1000

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
Division of Natural Heritage
217 Governor Street, 3rd Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219
804/786 7951

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
6669 Short Lane
Gloucester, Virginia 23061
804/693 6694

References

Batie, R. 1991. Virginia fringed mountain snail. Pages 309-310 in K. Terwilliger, ed. Virginia's Endangered Species, Proceedings of a Symposium. McDonald and Woodward Publishing Company, Blacksburg, Virginia.

Official World Wildlife Fund Guide to Endangered Species of North America, Volume 2. 1990. Beacham Publishing, Inc., Washington, D.C.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1983. Virginia fringed mountain snail (*Polygyriscus virginianus*) recovery plan. Newton Corner, Massachusetts.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Virginia Field Office
6669 Short Lane
Gloucester, Virginia 23061
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Federal Relay Service
for the deaf and hard-of-hearing
1 800/877 8339

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov>

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