

Chittenango Ovate Amber Snail

A rare resident

Chittenango Falls State Park is the only place in the world that the Chittenango Ovate Amber Snail (COAS) exists!



View from the fall's base

Habitat

COAS live within the fenced off protected area of the park located at the base of the 167 foot waterfall. They thrive here because of the moist conditions created by the waterfall's spray zones.



Can you see the growth lines?

Identification

COAS grow to about an inch. They have a translucent, yellowish shell that develops lines from growing, similar to rings on a tree. Their body is a pale, translucent yellow.

Biology

COAS live for about two and a half years. They reproduce by laying small jelly-like eggs. COAS feed on native vegetation and require a lot of calcium carbonate to grow strong shells.



COAS lay eggs in clusters



Did you know?

COAS like to lay their eggs at the base of plants or under vegetation. Why do you think a captive-reared COAS laid their eggs at the end of this stick?

Threats

Not-so smooth-snailing

COAS are listed as an endangered species by New York State and are federally listed as a threatened species. Below are factors that contribute to the decline of COAS population.

- Limited range
- Rock slides
- Human trampling inside the habitat
- Increased runoff
- Flooding and drought
- Invasive species
- Struggle to adapt to changes in the environment



'Snailers' team surveys the habitat



Must be trained before entering

Conservation

Captive breeding

These threatened snails are supported in captivity as part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) COAS recovery plan.



COAS in the lab

Why captive breeding?

Establishing captive colonies can provide backup if the wild population were to go extinct. Captive snails can also be used to augment the population.

How is a captive COAS colony raised?

Providing a proper diet is the largest part of maintaining a successful captive colony. COAS are picky eaters, consuming leaves of only specific native vegetation.

How are COAS fed?

COAS researchers and their team (referred to as 'Snailers') work hard collecting as many COAS approved leaves during the warmer months so the snails stay fed through the year.

What else do the 'Snailers' do?

The team changes COAS terrariums in the lab weekly by cleaning out containers, accounting for all snails, and refreshing their food.

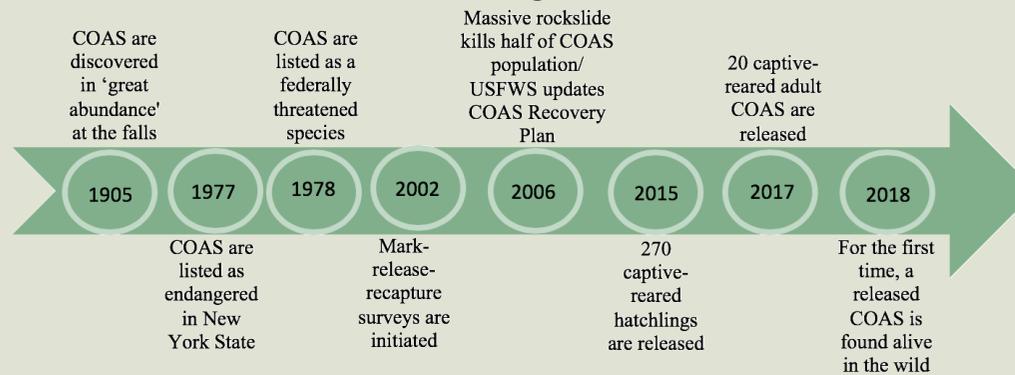
Mark-Release-Recapture

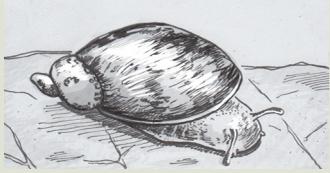
Captive-bred COAS are tagged before being reintroduced to the habitat so their progress can be tracked and monitored.



Bee tags are used for monitoring

Timeline of COAS at Chittenango Falls





Q & A for the Chittenango Ovate Amber Snail

Q Why is it important that we protect COAS?

A Like pieces to a puzzle, each native species plays an vital role in the ecosystem. Although small, these snails are crucial for nutrient cycling within the habitat. It is important that we work together to protect all the puzzle pieces to understand the full picture!

Q What can I do to help?

A There are several easy ways you can help protect the COAS during your visit at Chittenango Falls State Park.

- Stay on the marked trails
- Do not enter the fenced off protected area
- Follow the park's carry-in, carry-out policy
- Keep your pets on a leash

To help beyond your park visit, join our volunteer efforts or attend a conservation event!

Q Where can I find more information?

A For more information about COAS, please explore the following websites:

- www.fws.gov/
- www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7122.html
- www.nysparks.com/environment/forces.aspx
- www.facebook.com/Snailblazers-1701883819847688/
- <http://www.rosamondgiffordzoo.org/conservation/>



Partners and 'Snailers'



Senior Research Support Specialist, Cody Gilbertson, and the team of 'snailers' at a COAS population survey at Chittenango Falls State Park.

COAS conservation efforts are a result of the dedication and continuing involvement from the following partners:



State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry



Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Department of Environmental Conservation



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Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Chittenango Falls State Park



COAS



Chittenango Ovate Amber Snail

A rare snail's exciting tale



Novisuccinea chittenangoensis

Federal Status: Threatened

NY State Status: Endangered