

The Newsletter of the IUCN/SSC Mollusc Specialist Group  
Species Survival Commission • International Union for Conservation of Nature

# TENTACLE



UNITAS MALACOLOGICA



## EDITORIAL

A year ago in *Tentacle* issue 22, I once again expressed my desire to step down as Editor. Well, I am still here, now after 20 years and this my 19th issue of *Tentacle*. However, I am now ably assisted by two Associate Editors, both long-time members of the Mollusc Specialist Group: Dr. Justin Gerlach and Dr. Kathryn Perez.

Justin, now based in Cambridge, UK, has for a long time been interested in the endemic land snails of oceanic islands, having completed his Ph.D. in 1994 on the ecology of the predatory snail *Euglandina rosea*, the well-known scourge of these endangered faunas. Much of his research has focused on the fauna and flora of the Seychelles, but he recently returned to Pacific island tree snails and last year published [Snailing round the South Seas – the Partula story](#) (see page 35 of this issue of *Tentacle*). Additional details of his research and other conservation activities can be found at [his website](#).

Kathryn obtained her Ph.D. in 2005 and recently moved from the University of Wisconsin La Crosse to the University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA) in Edinburg, Texas, USA. She has been involved primarily with North American land and freshwater snails and their conservation, but has also made a brief foray into threatened hydrobiids of the Great Artesian Basin of Australia. Kathryn has been an active and enthusiastic member of the American Malacological Society's conservation committee for a number of years. She is especially involved in public outreach and innovative education. More details can be found via [her UTPA website](#) and [her personal website](#).

With Justin and Kathryn now helping me with much of the detailed editing and formatting of your submissions, my life has become much easier and so I will continue to act as Editor for the time being, until someone else wants to take over and modernise this perhaps rather aging newsletter. But as I have done many times before, I stress that it is especially important for the editorial team that you make every effort to format your submissions in the precise style of *Tentacle*, as explained on the following page.

Robert H. Cowie, Editor

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## LAND SNAILS OF SIERRA DE LAS CASAS PROTECTED AREA (ISLAND OF YOUTH, CUBA) AND THEIR CONSERVATION PROBLEMS

By Jane Herrera Uriá

Islands have inspired biologists since the beginning of scientific exploration, more than two centuries ago. Since Darwin and Wallace's time, research on island biotas has contributed substantially to our understanding of species formation, adaptive radiation, community assembly and extinction.

The Island of Youth (IY), Canarreos archipelago in southwestern Cuba, is considered one of the most important sites for endemism in Cuba because 30 % of its land snails are local endemics, like the exclusive genus *Pineria*. Sierra de las Casas Protected Area is located in the north of the IY. The reserve covers 300 ha with a maximum elevation of 261 m above sea level. Sierra de las Casas Protected Area (Fig. 1) has the highest percentage of endemic terrestrial snails of the IY (Espinosa & Ortea, 1999).

In general, the malacofauna of the IY has been well studied, but the existing information is scattered and out of date. The first malacological revision of the IY was published by Henderson (1916); he found 35 taxa. Later, Yong & Perera

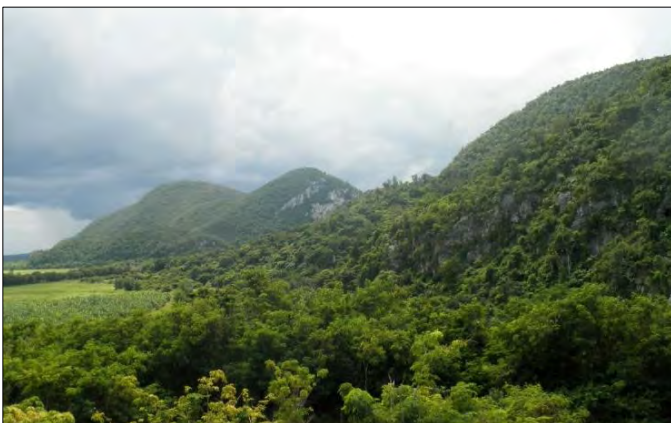


Fig. 1. Sierra de las Casas, IY.



Fig. 2. Deforestation.

(1984) studied the freshwater molluscs and reported 12 species on the island, only six of which had been reported previously. Milera & Correoso (2003) updated the list of molluscs of the IY, reporting 99 taxa in total (freshwater and terrestrial molluscs). No new data have been reported since then. For this reason the present research is important in terms of the current status of the land snails of Sierra de las Casas, completing their inventory and assessing the threats they face.

During June to October 2014 the terrestrial molluscs of northern and southern Sierra de las Casas were collected by hand, on rocks, fallen trunks and vegetation. All specimens were deposited in the scientific malacological collection of the National Museum of Natural History of Cuba. The species composition, endemism and threats were assessed using the following bibliography: Clench & Jacobson (1970); Torre & Bartsch (1958); Espinosa & Ortea (1999, 2009).

For the Sierra de las Casas Protected Area we reported 25 terrestrial mollusc species: 12 operculate species and 13 pulmonates. Of these, 14 species are endemic to the IY (56 %) and 10 species are introduced (44 %).

In their national biodiversity study, Vales *et al.* (1998) claimed, that the majority of Cuban terrestrial molluscs are threatened. In the case of the land snails of Sierra de las Casas, there are many threats to the conservation of these invertebrates. Damage to vegetation structure, inappropriate agricultural practices, introduction of exotic plants and animals, droughts, hurricanes and natural and human caused fires are some of them. But the principal threat to the conservation of terrestrial molluscs inhabiting these mountains is the intense human activity over an extensive period that has resulted in destruction and fragmentation of habitats. We detected human-caused deforestation (Fig. 2) and habitat fragmentation (Fig. 3). One of the principal economic activities in IY is marble export, with extraction primarily from Sierra de las Casas and Sierra de Colombo.

### Land snails of Sierra de las Casas, IY

\*endemic species

Class GASTROPODA

Subclass "PROSOBRANCHIA"

Family HELICINIDAE

*Helicina adspersa* Pfeiffer, 1839

*Alcadia hispida* (Pfeiffer, 1839)

\* *Priotrochatella constellata* (Morelet, 1847)



Fig. 3. Habitat fragmentation.

- \* *Priotrochatella torrei* Clapp, 1918
- \* *Troschelviana scopulorum* (Morelet, 1849)
- \* *Troschelviana callosa* (Poey, 1854)
- Family PROSERPINIDAE
- Proserpina globulosa* (d'Orbigny, 1842)
- Family MEGALOMASTOMATIDAE
- \* *Farcimen procer procer* (Poey, 1854)
- Family POTAMIIDAE
- \* *Chondropoma vespertinum vespertinum* (Morelet, 1851)
- \* *Rhytidopoma pinense pinense* Torre & Bartsch, 1941
- \* *Opisthosiphon pupoides pupoides* (Morelet, 1849)
- \* *Opisthosiphon moreletianum moreletianum* (Petit, 1850)
- Subclass "PULMONATA"
- Family VERONICELLIDAE
- Veronicella cubense* (Pfeiffer, 1840)
- Family ORTHALICIDAE
- Liguus fasciatus* (Müller, 1774)
- Family UROCOPTIDAE
- \* *Nesocoptis pruinosa pruinosa* (Morelet, 1849)
- \* *Nesocoptis pruinosa casasensis* Jaume & Torre, 1972
- \* *Pineria terebra terebra* Poey, 1854
- \* *Pineria beathiana* Poey, 1854
- Family SUBULINIDAE
- Lamellaxis gracilis* (Hutton, 1834)
- Obeliscus terebraster* (Lamarck, 1822)
- Family OLEACINIDAE
- Oleacina subulata* (Pfeiffer, 1839)
- Oleacina follicularis* (Morelet, 1849)
- Oleacina straminea* (Deshayes, 1819)

#### Family SPIRAXIDAE

\* *Spiraxis poeyanus* (Pfeiffer, 1866)

#### Family CEPOLIDAE

*Jeanneretia bicincta* (Menke, 1830)

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