



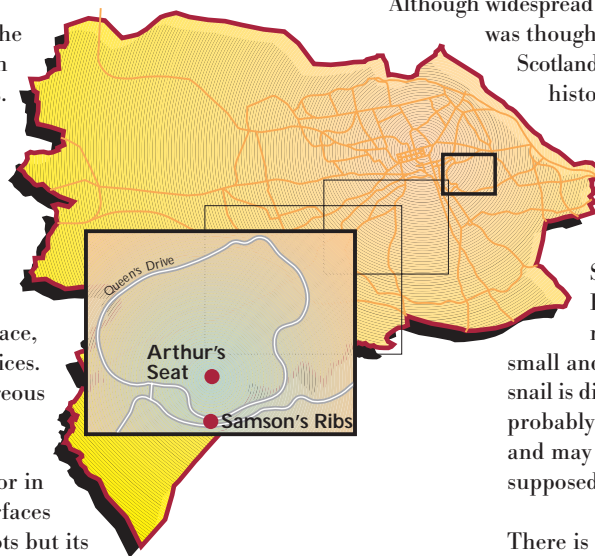
Blind White Snail

(Cecilioides acicula)

STATUS & ECOLOGY

The blind white snail is very small, measuring only 5mm by 1.2 mm. The shell is very narrow and slender with five and a half feebly convex whorls. It is colourless, delicate, glassy and transparent when fresh. After death it quickly becomes white and opaque. The body is colourless and eyes are absent.

A subterranean species, the blind white snail lives well below the surface, amongst plant roots or in rock crevices. In England it can be found in calcareous soils on meadows, downs and in graveyards; but is most commonly recorded as dead in flood rubbish, or in mole hills or ant hills, as it only surfaces by accident. It is said to feed on roots but its biology is poorly understood.



Distribution of Blind White Snail in Edinburgh

Although widespread in Europe, the blind white snail was thought, until recently, to be absent in Scotland and Northern Ireland, although historic records exist of sightings to the west of Edinburgh and in East Lothian. However, recent recordings of both dead and living individuals have been made on Arthur's Seat and on Samson's Ribs in Holyrood Park. It should be noted though that being both small and subterranean, the blind white snail is difficult to find, and has therefore probably been greatly under-recorded, and may not be as scarce as has been supposed.

There is no legislation specifically protecting the blind white snail.

“There can be few groups of invertebrates so despised by the general public as snails. However, these creatures have a vital place on this earth”

Michael Kerney

FACTORS CAUSING LOSS OR DECLINE

Impacts

The loss and/or alteration of habitat is likely to have impacted on the distribution of the blind white snail, both across the UK and in Edinburgh.

Threats

Habitat loss and damage remains a concern. However, the only known location of the blind white snail in Scotland, Holyrood Park, is subject to a management plan and is unlikely to come under significant pressure.

CURRENT ACTION

The Holyrood Royal Park Management Plan identifies the blind white snail as a Scottish rarity. One of the management plan's objectives is to maintain and enhance populations of rare flora and fauna. To this end a rare species action states that information will be collected relating to species life cycles and habitat requirements.

ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES & TARGETS

Objectives

To determine the status and ensure the conservation of the blind white snail in Edinburgh.

Targets

To survey Holyrood Park and other likely Edinburgh locations of the blind white snail and encourage landowners to introduce land management practices that would favour its conservation.

Actions

Undertake a survey of likely habitat in Holyrood Park, by Autumn 2001, to determine the local extent and distribution of the blind white snail.

(Actioned by: Historic Scotland)

Identify and survey other possible locations of the blind white snail in Edinburgh by Winter 2003.

(Actioned by: Lothian Wildlife Information Centre & Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership Invertebrate Group)

Encourage, from Winter 2002, landowners on whose land the blind white snail is discovered to manage key habitats in a manner beneficial to conserving the species.

(Actioned by: Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership)

Key Contacts

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CHAMPIONS

