

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT  
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Invertebrate Abstract

Element Code: IMGASC9750  
Data Sensitivity: No

**CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE**

**NAME:** *Sonorella walkeri* Pilsbry and Ferriss, 1915  
**COMMON NAME:** Santa Rita talussnail  
**SYNONYMS:** *Sonorella montana* Pilsbry and Ferriss, 1919; *S. walkeri cotis* Pilsbry and Ferriss, 1919  
**FAMILY:** Helminthoglyptidae

**AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION:** Pilsbry and Ferriss, 1915, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia 67(1915): 394-396.

**TYPE LOCALITY:** Santa Rita Mtns., Walnut Branch of Agua Caliente Canyon; elev. ca. 6000 ft.; Ferriss et al. Sta. 5. (SBMNH, accessed 2008).

**TYPE SPECIMEN:** Paratype: SBMNH 34323. Ferriss et al., 1910, Station 5, 1 dry specimen.

**TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS:** Based on an unpublished revision by W.B. Miller (1968a, in Bequaert and Miller 1973), he recognized 68 valid species of *Sonorella* (with 19 subspecies), 57 of them in Arizona (three common with Sonora), 3 in New Mexico, 1 in trans-Pecos Texas (in common with New Mexico), 8 in Sonora (3 in common with Arizona), and 3 in Chihuahua. *Sonorella walkeri* is 1 of 26 species in the *S. hachitana* Complex.

**DESCRIPTION:** Snails in the genus *Sonorella* have a “depressed globose, helicoids shell, 12 to 30 mm in diameter, umbilicate or perforate, with a wide, unobstructed mouth and a thin, barely expanded peristome, smoothish or slightly sculptured with growth-lines, occasionally with fine oblique or spiral granulation and short hairs (mainly on the early whorls), lightly colored, and normally with a dark peripheral band. Its most characteristic features are, however, in the genitalia, which lack a dart sac and mucus glands.” (Bequaert and Miller, 1973). For species in the *S. hachitana* Complex: the penis is a usually long, slender, narrowly pointed verge; and in extreme forms, the verge is thick and club-shaped. Shells are relatively large and capacious, with a smooth, silky-lustrous periostracum; usually with apical spirally descending threads. (Bequaert and Miller, 1973). *Sonorella walkeri* has 4.6 whorls, is 14 mm in height and 23 mm in width. The subglobose shell has a conical spire, is pale cinnamon in color, and lighter around the umbilicus. There is a chestnut brown band on the shoulder that fades on both sides into whitish; the aperture is a rounded oval. ([Http://members.tripod.com/arnobrosi/oreohelicidae.html](http://members.tripod.com/arnobrosi/oreohelicidae.html) accessed 2008).

**AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION:** The most characteristic features of the genus *Sonorella* are, in the genitalia, which lack a dart sac and mucus glands (Bequaert and Miller 1972).

**ILLUSTRATIONS:**

**TOTAL RANGE:** In Arizona from the Santa Rita and Atascosa Mountain Ranges of Santa Cruz counties, and the Whetstone Mountains of Cochise County. Also ranges south into Sonora, Mexico. (Bequaert and Miller, 1973).

**RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA:** See “Total Range.”

**SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS**

**BIOLOGY:** Terrestrial gastropods do not move much, usually only to find food or reproduce. Olfaction is the primary sensory behavior utilized to find and move toward a food item (on the scale of centimeters to meters). A moving terrestrial gastropod lays down water-laden mucus on which it moves, exposing its integument to a potentially drying atmosphere, and increasing its water losses through the pallial cavity because of the necessity for gas exchange. A roosting terrestrial gastropod deploys a variety of passive mechanisms for water conservation, including the direct protection of its wet surfaces from drying conditions, avoidance of temperature extremes, the creation of more favorable microclimates and decreases in gas exchange. (A. Cook, *in* Barker 2001).

**REPRODUCTION:**

**FOOD HABITS:** Probably omnivorous, feeding on plant material (including algae, mosses, lichens, and possibly roots, shoots, leaves, flowers, anthers, pollen, fruit, seeds and rotting wood), and microorganisms associated with live and decaying vegetation; followed to a lesser extent by fungi and soil. (Speiser, *in* Barker, 2001).

**HABITAT:** *Sonorella walkeri* was collected among rocks under dead agaves; in a rock outcropping above road; in a rock-pile between road & creek on right bank of creek; in rock slides and fissures along right bank of creek; under log at parking lot near trailhead (SBNMH, accessed 2008). As a group the talussnail is a rock snail usually found in taluses or “slides” of coarse broken rock, generally found in crevices one to several feet below the surface, sealed to stones by their mucus. (SDCP, 2005).

**ELEVATION:** Found between 4,400 – 6,000 feet (1342-1830 m) in Santa Cruz County, and 4,800 – 5,100 feet (1464-1556 m) in Cochise County (Bequaert & Miller, 1973).

**PLANT COMMUNITY:**

**POPULATION TRENDS:** Unknown.

**SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION**

**ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS:** None  
**STATE STATUS:** 2 (AZGFD, AWCS 2022)  
[1C (AGFD SWAP 2012)]  
**OTHER STATUS:** None

**MANAGEMENT FACTORS:** Threats include destruction or disturbance of talus slopes.

**PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN:**

**SUGGESTED PROJECTS:** Validity of the informal *Sonorella* “species-groups” (or “complexes”) has been brought into question by Naranjo-García (1988) and Roth (1996). Further research, including the use of molecular techniques, is needed to help clarify the relationships of these informal taxa. (Gilbertson and Radke 2005).

**LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP:** USFS – Coronado National Forest.

**SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION****REFERENCES:**

- Arizona Game and Fish Department. 2012. Arizona's State Wildlife Action Plan 2012-2022. Phoenix, AZ.
- Arizona Game and Fish Department. 2022. Arizona Wildlife Conservation Strategy: 2022-2032. Arizona Game and Fish Department, Phoenix, Arizona. 378 pages.
- Bequaert, J.C., and W.B. Miller. 1973. The Mollusks of the Arid Southwest. The University of Arizona Press. Tucson, Arizona. Pp. 111, 115.
- <http://members.tripod.com/arnobrosi/oreohelicidae.html>. Accessed: 23 April 2008.
- <http://www.co.pima.az.us/cmo/sdcp/sdcp2/fsheets/vuln/ts.html>. Fact-sheet: Talusnail, *Sonorella*. Accessed: 11/23/2005.
- Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS). Retrieved 4/23/2008 from ITIS, <http://www.itis.usda.gov>.
- MCZ Malacology Collection. Accessed: 4/23/2008. <http://collections.oeb.harvard.edu/Mollusks/MolluskDetail.cfm>.
- NatureServe. 2008. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 7.0. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <https://explorer.natureserve.org/> (Accessed: April 23, 2008).
- Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. 2008. SBMNH: Invertebrate Zoology Online Database Collection. <http://www.sbcollections.org/iz/recordview.php>. Accessed: 4/23/2008.
- The Academy of Natural Sciences. ANSP Malacology Search Details. Accessed: 23 April 2008. <http://clade.ansp.org/malacology/collections/index.php>.

The American Museum of Natural History. 2002-2005. IZ Type Specimens Database.

[http://research.amnh.org/invertzoo/types\\_db/details.php](http://research.amnh.org/invertzoo/types_db/details.php). Accessed: 4/23/2008.

The Field Museum. 2007. Department of Zoology Invertebrates Collections. Accessed

4/23/2008. <http://emuweb.fieldmuseum.org/iz/MolluscDisplay.php>.

#### MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The genus *Sonorella* occurs over most of Arizona (except a strip north of the Grand Canyon, an extensive northeast corner, and the small southwest *Eremarionta* area), the southwest corner of New Mexico, trans-Pecos Texas, northeast Sonora, and the northwest corner of Chihuahua, Mexico. (Bequaert and Miller, 1973).

**Revised:** 2008-05-21 (SMS)  
2023-02-14 (MBL)

To the user of this abstract: you may use the entire abstract or any part of it. We do request, however, that if you make use of this abstract in plans, reports, publications, etc. that you credit the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Please use the following citation:

Arizona Game and Fish Department. 20XX (= **year of last revision as indicated at end of abstract**). X...X (= **taxon of animal or plant**). Unpublished abstract compiled and edited by the Heritage Data Management System, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Phoenix, AZ. X pp.