

Pomacea glauca (Pale Conch)

Superfamily: Ampullarioidea (Operculate Snails)

Class: Gastropoda (Snails and Slugs)

Phylum: Mollusca (Molluscs)



Fig. 1. Pale conch, *Pomacea glauca*.

[<http://idtools.org/id/mollusc/factsheet.php?name=Pomacea%20spp>, downloaded 30 October 2016]

TRAITS. The pale conch has a thick shell with a deep, indented suture between the coils, and the spire is often eroded. The opening of the shell is large and elliptical and can be closed by an operculum (horny plate) (Fig. 1). This species has separate sexes; the female shells are bigger than the males. They vary in size but can grow up to 70mm and usually display pale colours (Starmuhlner, 1988).

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION. *Pomacea glauca* inhabits mostly clear tropical water (Fig. 2) with low sanitary levels (Perera and Walls, 1996). They are native to Bolivia, Panama, Guadeloupe, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Colombia, French Guiana, British Guiana, Grenada, Guyana and Venezuela. They were introduced to Asia and Africa to assist with pest control so they can also be found there (IUCN, 2011) (Fig. 3).

REPRODUCTION. The incubation period of this species is 2-6 weeks and has a longevity up to three years. They take up to 8-13.5 months to fully mature into an adult. Eggs are laid above the waterline on vegetation or rocks to protect them from the harm of other water organisms (IUCN, 2011). Eggs are bright green in colour and are laid in clutches (Perera and Walls, 1996) (Fig. 4). The number and size of eggs is dependent on the subspecies but they can have a maximum of over 1000 eggs per clutch. Copulation occurs in the water, mainly during the rainy season (IUCN, 2011).

BEHAVIOUR. They are amphibious and submerge in the day, hiding in vegetation close to the surface, but also active on land at night. They often go on land in search of food and feed on most plants, but eat little or no green algae. They are well adapted to tropical conditions of drought and rainfall. During the dry season they close the operculum to prevent desiccation, and hide in the mud. They possess a tubular siphon which is used for breathing while still submerged in the water which allows them to be less vulnerable to predators. Their respiratory system comprises gills at the right side and lungs at the left side of the body, which expands the environment to search for food (Carlsson, 2004).

APPLIED BIOLOGY. They are often used as pets due to their interesting colour and manageable size. It is sold under the name of golden mystery snail. Hence it may be widely dispersed due to trading activity (Carlsson, 2004).

REFERENCES

- Carlsson. 2004. <http://www.tv3.cat/videos/1478229/El-caragol-poma-envaeix-lEbre>.
IUCN. 2011. *Pomacea glauca*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2011: e.T189046A868433
<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/189046/0>.
Perera G. and Walls J. G. 1996. Apple Snails in the Aquarium. T. F. H. Publications Inc., 55-56.
Starmühlner, F. 1988. Ergebnisse der Österreichisch-Französischen Hydrobiologischen Mission.

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Fig. 2. *Pomacea glauca* in natural habitat.

[http://zipcodezoo.com/index.php/Pomacea_gigas 2001, downloaded 30 October 2016]

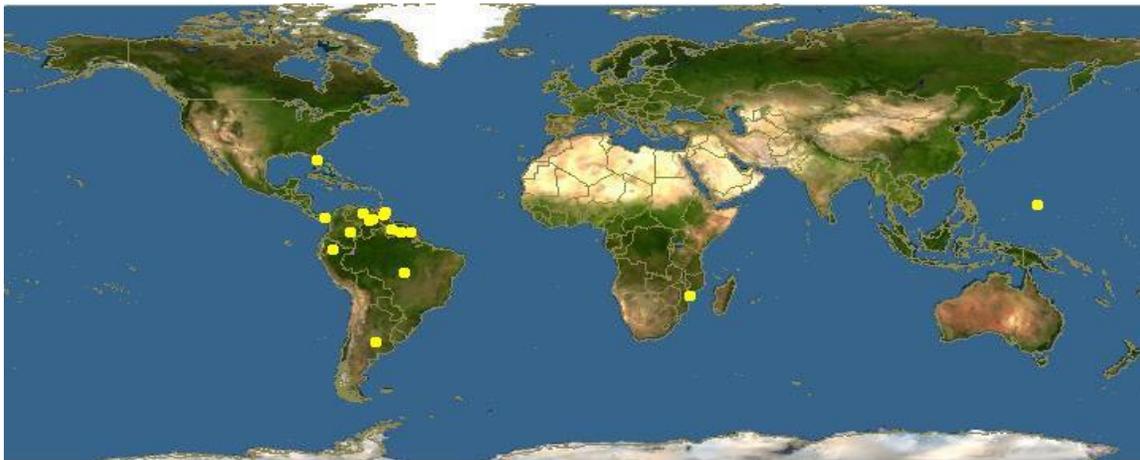


Fig. 3. Distribution of *Pomacea glauca*.

[<http://www.discoverlife.org/mp/20q?search=Pomacea+glauca>, downloaded 30 October 2016]



Fig. 4. Eggs of *Pomacea glauca*.

[<http://www.suggest-keywords.com/cG9tYWNiYSBIZ2dz/>, downloaded 30 October 2016]

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