

ROCKY MOUNTAIN SNAIL
(*OREOHELIX STRIGOSA*)

Navajo/Federal Statuses: NESL G4 / not listed under the ESA.

Distribution: Species mostly occurs in swath through western states of WA, ID, and MT south through UT, CO to northern third of AZ and NM; subspecies on Navajo Nation (*O.s.depressa*) occurs in southern half of U.S. range. One historic record from south slope of Navajo Mountain, but presently known from few locations in the Chuska Mountains. Potential throughout forested areas and possibly canyonlands on Navajo Nation.

Habitat: On Navajo Nation, known populations are in leaf-litter or within/near rocks and rock outcrops within steep-sloped, northern-aspect coniferous forests; steep-walled canyons and areas that maintain moist soils are also potential. Within most of U.S. range, restricted to limestone outcrops or under vegetation on limestone slopes where presence of limestone is critical; sandstone seems to provide adequate substrate in some exceptions (especially on the Navajo Nation). Composition of the plant community is of little importance in determining potential habitat (ranging from no vegetation to sagebrush, deciduous shrubs and trees, and coniferous forests); however, a cool, moist microclimate and leaf mold are critical.

Similar Species: *Oreohelix* are the largest land snails on Navajo Nation, but species may be difficult to differentiate due to local variations in size and coloration; usually require examination by a expert specializing in mollusks. *Oreohelix* typically have a rough-textured, depressed-heliciform-shaped shell, are opaque with coloration of pale greyish-white to dark brownish, and typically have two bands of darker brown (one prominent band above and another just below the periphery). *O.strigosa* tends to be larger in circumference (~19-26 mm) and height of spire, and sometimes with more than two dark bands along shell. Other than *O.yavapai*, only one other *Oreohelix* (*O.houghi*) has been recorded on Navajo Nation (in Canyon Diablo); *O.houghi* is generally smaller in circumference (16-20mm), has irregular or spotted bands, and no spiral striation.

Phenology:

e.APR-1.OCT¹: non-migratory residents, most active during/after rainy periods

e.NOV-1.MAR: over-wintering

¹time periods estimated; information on phenology is lacking

Survey Method: ≥1 survey during 1 MAY-1 OCT, especially during rainy periods, at an effort sufficient to have high likelihood of detecting the species; locating dead shells on surface of ground is easiest way to determine presence.

Avoidance: No surface disturbance year-round within 60 m of occupied habitat.

References:

NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. 2005. Version 4.2. Arlington (VA): NatureServe. Available: <http://www.natureserve.org/>. (Accessed: January 12, 2005).

Pilsbry, H.A. 1939. Land Mollusca of North America (North of Mexico). The Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. Monograph No.3, Vol.1, Part 1.