



Lymnaea (Stagnicola) caperata Say 1829
wrinkled marshsnail

Taxonomy & Systematics. Among the families of strictly freshwater basommatophoran pulmonates, the worldwide Lymnaeidae is generally held to have retained the greatest fraction of ancestral characters. Lymnaeids are anatomically conservative, most species being assigned to the typical genus *Lymnaea* by Hubendick. Populations may, however, display great diversity in life history and various aspects of external morphology, especially shell, which has led to a proliferation of specific nomina.

The gill has been lost, leaving respiration to occur across the entire mantle cavity, as is true for pulmonates in general. This can be seen as an adaptation to the colonization of warm or stagnant freshwaters, where the concentration of oxygen may be reduced. All of the lymnaeid species of southern Atlantic drainages are to some extent amphibious, often being observed above the water line. They are hermaphroditic, as is also true for pulmonates in general, typically capable of self-fertilization and laying eggs in gelatinous, sausage-shaped masses with a tough covering.

F. C. Baker initially assigned *caperata* to the genus *Galba*, transferring the taxon to *Stagnicola* in 1928. But we follow Hubendick in preferring the inclusive genus *Lymnaea*, with *Stagnicola* a subgenus. Hubendick suggested that the nomen *caperata* might be a junior synonym of *humilis*, but the two species seem distinct to us.

Habitat & Distribution. We have not confirmed *L. caperata* from southern Atlantic drainages, although there are reports from northern Virginia. This is typically a more northern species, ranging coast to coast from New York to California, north to through Alberta and south through Colorado. Populations are most commonly found in wetlands, primarily inhabiting vernal ponds, weedy ditches, and the shallow margins of rivers and lakes.

Ecology & Life History. The vernal character of the wetlands typically inhabited by *L. caperata* seems to have discouraged study of their population biology. One might speculate that populations of *L. caperata* share the annual, semelparous life cycle typically displayed by larger-bodied pulmonates in northern latitudes, overwintering beneath the frozen soil, emerging to reproduce with the spring thaw. *Lymnaea caperata* has been mentioned in the summer diet of blue-winged teal.

Conservation Status. NatureServe G5/SNR - Secure/Not assessed.