



Pomatiopsis lapidaria (Say 1817)

slender walker

Taxonomy & Systematics. The Pomatiopsidae is a worldwide family of small, rissooid gastropods distinguished from the hydrobiids by detail of radula and reproductive anatomy, as well as by their amphibious or even terrestrial life habit. Sexes are separate, although perhaps not in equal proportions. The penis arises from the neck. Eggs are laid singly in firm mud or soil.

Junior synonyms of *Pomatiopsis lapidaria* include *hinkleyi* and *praelonga*.

Habitat & Distribution. We have not confirmed *P. lapidaria* in southern Atlantic drainages, although Hubricht listed three records in North Carolina, one in South Carolina, and two in Georgia. There are also several reports from Virginia, especially in the vicinity of Washington DC, and further west. *Pomatiopsis lapidaria* ranges broadly through the interior drainages of the United States east of the Rockies, just reaching Canada in southern Ontario.

Pomatiopsis populations typically reach maximum abundances on moist soil and mud on river banks above the water level. Individual *P. lapidaria* may stray up dry hillsides to considerable distances. Hubricht reported that populations of southern Atlantic drainages inhabit swamps of the coastal plain, "only in swamps with uneven ground in which there were numerous small hummocks of dry land to which they could retreat during the wet season." This is a habitat not typically sampled by freshwater malacologists, and as such, the snail may often be overlooked.

Ecology & Life History. Cultured in clay pots of moist soil, *P. lapidaria* requires about 12 months to mature, with a maximum life span of about 24 months. Experimental evidence suggests that *P. lapidaria* can survive several days of desiccation at 25 degrees and 30% relative humidity, and drown after several days of total immersion.

North American *Pomatiopsis* is biologically similar to *Oncomelania*, the host of schistosomiasis in the Orient, and hybridization has been reported in the laboratory.

Conservation Status. NatureServe G5/S4 - Secure/Apparently Secure.