

LAND SNAILS FROM COMINO (MOLLUSCA: GASTROPODA)

Martin A. THAKE

169, Fleur de Lys Road, Birkirkara. MALTA

ABSTRACT

A list of 23 species of land mollusca collected from the islet of Comino is given. Information about distribution and status is also given.

The results reported here were obtained during two visits to Comino in spring and summer 1975. Snails were searched for in suitable places, collected and later identified. Easy species were identified in the field and were not collected. A few specimens have not yet been identified. The sites where specimens were collected are indicated in Figure 1 while the status of the various species is indicated in Table 1.

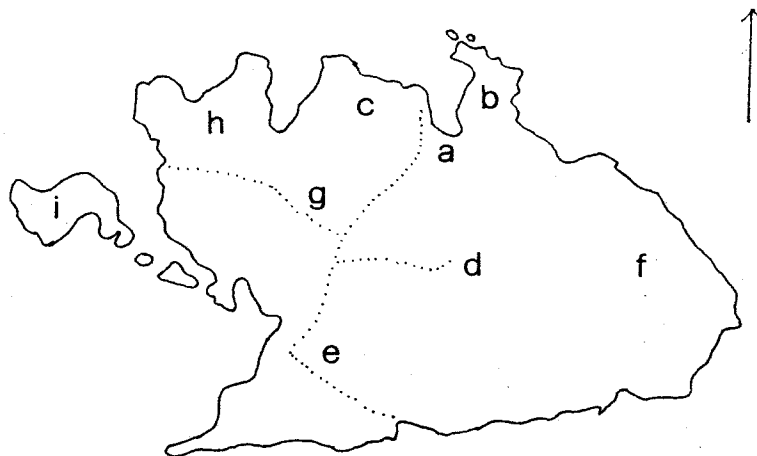


Fig. 1. Comino Island showing sites where specimens were collected.

SPECIES	LOCALITIES AND FREQUENCY								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
<i>Pomatias sulcatus melitense</i> Sowerby	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c
<i>Granopupa granum</i> (Draparnaud)			a	a			a		a
<i>Pleurodiscus balmei</i> Potiez & Michaud							s		
<i>Mastus pupa</i> (L.)	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c
<i>Lampedusa syracusana</i> (Philippi)	f	a	c	c	c	a	c	f	c
<i>Papillifera bidens</i> (L.)	c	c	c	a	c	c	c	c	c
<i>Caecilioides melitensis</i> Westerlund				s		s			
<i>Ferussacia vescoi</i> Bourguignat		f	s	f	s	s	s	s	f
<i>Rumina decollata</i> (L.)	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f
<i>Oxychilus draparnaudi</i> (Beck)				f					
<i>Milax insularis</i> Lessona & Pollonera				f					
<i>Milax gagates</i> Draparnaud			s						
<i>Cerneuella caruanae</i> Kobelt	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f
<i>Trochoidea spratti</i> (Pfeiffer)		a							
<i>Trochoidea schembrii</i> (Pfeiffer)	s		f	f	c	c	c	c	c
<i>Xerotricha conspurcata</i> Draparnaud				s					
<i>Cochlicella acuta</i> (Müller)					f				f
<i>Leucochroa candidissima</i> (Draparnaud)	c	a	c	c	c	a	c	c	c
<i>Caracollina lenticula</i> Ferrusac	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f
<i>Euparypha pisana</i> (Müller)	a								
<i>Eobania vermiculata</i> (Müller)	c	a	c	c	c	c	c	c	c
<i>Helix aperta</i> Born	c								
<i>Helix aspersa</i> Müller	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c

Table 1. Distribution of land molluscs on Comino. a = abundant, c = common, f = frequent, s = scarce. The localities are as shown in Figure 1.

DISCUSSION

At present Comino is mostly uncultivated but large areas show evidence of having been under cultivation in the past. Some fields have been fallow for only a few years while others have not been cultivated for several hundred years. Various seral communities may be found in the succession from steppe to garigue to maquis. In this respect, the communities on Comino resemble those on the Marfa peninsula (Malta) rather than those on the adjacent parts of Gozo. Considerable areas show no evidence of cultivation whatsoever (particularly "b" and parts of "f").

Faunistic evidence suggests that Comino lies closer to Gozo than to Malta. The presence of *Trochoidea spratti* suggests a relatively recent link to Gozo. *T. spratti* is absent from Malta. There is one record from St. Paul's Island (DESPOTT in SOOS, 1933) but a thorough search of the Island in summer 1975 failed to produce any specimens. Despott's record may be erroneous.

T. spratti and *T. schembrii* were not found together on Comino and searches in Gozo have produced similar results. This suggests that they mutually exclude one another by competition.

REFERENCES

- SOOS, L. (1933). A systematic and zoogeographical contribution to the mollusc fauna of the Maltese Islands and Lampedusa. *Arch. Naturg.* 2(3): 305 - 353.

received December 1980

Arnold Seibers

Jan 2004