



Notopala essingtonensis (Frauenfeld, 1862)



Notopala essingtonensis (adult size 22.5-32 mm)



Distribution of *Notopala essingtonensis*.



Creek on main highway, near Adelaide River, NT.
Notopala essingtonensis habitat. Photo V. Kessner.

Diagnostic features

This species differs from other species of *Notopala* in its somewhat conical shell with dark colour bands. Similar banding is seen in *N. tricincta* but that is a riverine species with a shorter spire and relatively larger aperture.

Classification

Notopala essingtonensis (Frauenfeld, 1862)

Common name: Port Essington river snail

Class: Gastropoda

Infraclass: Caenogastropoda

Informal group: Architaenioglossa

Order: Viviparida

Superfamily: Viviparioidea

Family: Viviparidae

Subfamily: Bellamyinae

Genus *Notopala* Cotton, 1935

Original name: *Vivipara essingtonensis* Frauenfeld, 1862. In Frauenfeld, G. R. von. 1862. Zusammenstellung der Arten der Gattung *Vivipara* Lmk. in Kaiserlichen Sammlung. *Verhandlungen der kaiserlich-königlichen Zoologisch-Botanischen Gesellschaft Wien* 12(2): 1162-1170.

Type locality: Port Essington, Northern Territory. Note: this locality is in error as this species does not occur in the Port Essington area.

State of taxonomy

The taxonomy used here for Viviparidae is largely based on unpublished research by W. Ponder. Several undescribed taxa are known that mainly occur in areas outside the distribution of the species recognised here.

Biology and ecology

This species is found in billabongs, coastal lagoons and temporary pools associated with drainage channels. Although the biology of this species has not been studied, its anatomy shows that it is, at least in part, a suspension feeder, using the gill for filtering food from the water like other viviparids, and that it broods its eggs in the pallial oviduct. The brooded young are released simultaneously.

Distribution

Typical *N. essingtonensis* is found on the Adelaide River flood plains and nearby areas, south of Darwin, Northern Territory. The type locality, "Port Essington" (on the Coburg Peninsula) is incorrect as this species is not found in that area. Similar shell forms are found in Queensland and (rarely) in New South Wales, but these may represent undescribed taxa.

Notes

Stoddart (1982) used this species name for all of the banded species of *Notopala*.

Banded species of *Notopala* found in several parts of northern Australia and Queensland are *N. essingtonensis*, *N. tricineta* and *N. kingi*, as well as some thought to be different species (W. Ponder, unpublished studies) which should be identified simply as *Notopala* sp.

Further reading

Cotton, B. C. (1935a). The Australian viviparous river snails. *Victorian Naturalist* 52: 96-99.

Cotton, B. C. (1935b). Recent Australian Viviparidae and a fossil species. *Records of the South Australian Museum* 5: 339-344.

Iredale, T. (1943). A basic list of the fresh water Mollusca of Australia. *Australian Zoologist* 10: 188-230.

Sheldon, F. & Walker, K. F. (1993). Shell variation in Australian *Notopala* (Gastropoda: Prosobranchia: Viviparidae). *Journal of the Malacological Society of Australia* 14: 59-71.

Smith, B. J. (1992). Non-marine Mollusca. Pp. i-xii, 1-408 in W. W. K. Houston. *Zoological Catalogue of Australia*, 8. Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service.

Stoddart, J. A. (1982). Western Australian viviparids (Prosobranchia: Mollusca). *Journal of the Malacological Society of Australia* 5: 167-173.

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https://keys.lucidcentral.org/keys/v3/freshwater_molluscs/

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