



Potamopyrgus Stimpson, 1865

Diagnostic features

Shell small, 3-12 mm in length, broadly ovate to narrowly conical, spire outlines and whorls convex, sutures impressed, simple. Protoconch dome-shaped, of about 1.3 whorls, sculptured with minute, hollow blisters which, when worn, leave surface pitted teleoconch of about 3 whorls, smooth except for axial growth lines and sometimes with periostracal ornament of spines and processes (in *P. antipodarum*). Aperture large to medium, oval, outer lip slightly prosocline; inner lip somewhat thickened, attached to parietal wall at all but anterior end in some specimens separated by narrow groove in others. Colour yellowish brown to orange-brown or brown, aperture white to yellow, colour imparted mainly by periostracum. Operculum thin, horny, paucispiral, nucleus eccentric, with calcareous smear.

Classification

Potamopyrgus Stimpson, 1865

Class Gastropoda

Infraclass Caenogastropoda

Order Littorinida

Suborder Rissoidina

Superfamily Truncatelloidea

Family Tateidae

Genus *Potamopyrgus* Stimpson, 1865

Type species: Melania corolla Gould, 1847 (= *Amnicola antipodarum* Gray, 1843)

Original reference: Stimpson, W. (1865). Diagnoses of newly discovered genera of gastropods, belonging to the sub-fam. Hydrobiinae, of the family Rissoidae. *Am. J. Conchol.* 1, 524.

Type locality: New Zealand.

Synonym: Huttonia Johnston, 1891

Biology and ecology

The Lord Howe Island '*P. oscitans*' appears to be restricted to vertical or nearly vertical rock faces under flowing, permanent water. The introduced *P. antipodarum* lives in polluted and unpolluted streams, lakes and drains in urban and rural areas. It lives on most kinds of substrate, including the inside of water pipes and water reticulation systems. Members of the genus feed on bacteria, microscopic algae, diatoms and, possibly, decaying vegetation. *P. antipodarum* is ovoviviparous, and parthenogenic, and has become a pest wherever it has been introduced, often reaching enormous population densities.

Distribution

New Zealand. One species (*P. antipodarum*) has been introduced to Europe, Asia, North America and south eastern Australia. A species from Lord Howe Island has been tentatively assigned to this genus.

Notes

The introduction to Europe, North America, Asia and Australia by *Potamopyrgus antipodarum* is well documented in the literature. In Europe the species had been named *Potamopyrgus jenkinsi* (Smith). It remains to be seen whether the Lord Howe Island '*Potamopyrgus*' *oscitans* actually belongs to this genus.

Further reading

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