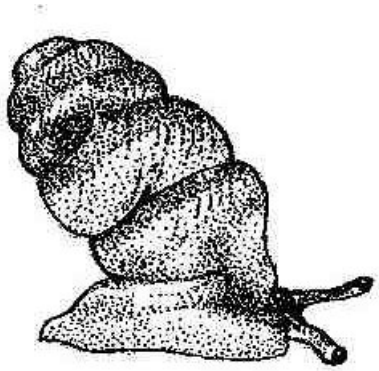
Narrow-mouth Whorl Snail (*Vertigo angustior*)



1 Definition

The Narrow-mouth Whorl Snail is generally found in permanently wet grassland or amongst moss in damp hollows in sand dunes. In Suffolk it occurs in the transition zone between grassland and saltmarsh where sedges are dominant.

2 Current status

2.1 National

One of Britain's rarest snails; it is found at only nine sites in the UK. It is in serious decline throughout its European range.

2.2 Local

The presence of Narrow-mouth Whorl Snail has been confirmed at one site in Suffolk at Martlesham Creek. Previously recorded at Aldeburgh and records of dead shells (possibly fossil) from Redgrave. The snail is no longer present at Market Western fen.

At Martlesham Creek it occurs at low density half-way along the southern side of the creek. It inhabits a narrow transition zone (c.10metres wide) just above saltmarsh and tidal drift-line deposits.

3 Current factors affecting narrow-mouthed whorl snails in Suffolk

- The reasons for decline are nor clearly understood but the main threats are believed to be changes in hydrological conditions, reduced grazing pressure and physical disturbance.
- The decline of *V. angustior* at Martlesham may be due to the *Iris/Carex* community becoming shaded by Reed canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea* and tall herbs.

4 Current Action

4.1 Legal Status

Vertigo angustior is protected under the Annex II of the EC Habitats Directive.
It is listed as rare in the IUCN Red data list for Invertebrates in Great Britain (1991).

4.2 Management, research and guidance

- A survey was undertaken at Martlesham Creek in 1996 under contract to English Nature.
- Two surveys are being undertaken in the autumn of 2003, these are along the Blyth estuary and within Easton Broad valley, north of Southwold.
- The new information provided about this species indicates that the Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail is inhabiting new types of habitat than previously thought. Part of the specification of the surveys being undertaken in autumn 2003 will be to establish habitat preference and to discover more about this species. These results are likely to be published in 2004.

5 Action Plan Objectives and Targets

1 Identify further sites where populations are thought to exist
2 Enable existing populations to increase in size and spread in range
3 Identify local habitat requirements of the species

6 Narrow-mouthed whorl snail: Proposed Action with Lead Agencies

Action	Date	Partners
POLICY AND LEGISLATION		
Ensure those Strategies for coastal management take into account this species' habitat requirements. Suffolk Estuaries Strategies being produced within the next 3 years.	2004 2005	**EA, EN**
Ensure compliance with Habitats Directive in all development schemes and agri-environment grants for all known sites.	2004 2005 2006 2007	**Defra, EN, EA, SWT, WDC**
SITE SAFEGUARD AND MANAGEMENT		
Seek to secure favourable management of Martlesham site. Requires urgent management work to control *Phalaris* grassland.	2004 2005 2006 2007	**Defra**
SPECIES MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION		
Provide advice following results from 2003 surveys on species habitat requirements.	2004 2005 2006 2007	**BAP Wetland Working Group**
RESEARCH AND MONITORING		
Determine the extent of *Vertigo angustior* within other estuaries in Suffolk. Identify which fall within protected areas. Re-survey previous historical recorded sites.	2004 2005 2006 2007	**EA**, EN, SWT, SBRC
Establish habitat requirements of this species and publish results to allow widespread dissemination.	2004	**BAP Wetland Working Group,** EA, EN
ADVISORY		
Advise landowners on presence and requirements of snail.	2004 2005 2006 2007	**BAP Wetland Working Group,** EN, SWT, EA, SBRC
COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICITY		
Produce positive publicity material to raise awareness of this species in Suffolk.	2004	**BAP Wetland Working Group,** EA, EN, SWT, SBRC