

Stop

The Invasion



Photographs courtesy of the
Washington State Department of
Agriculture

Mediterranean White Snail

Cerutuella virgata

Report
Sightings
@

invasivespecies.wa.gov

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What is it?

The Mediterranean snail is small (less than 1 inch across) and white or tan in color with dark brown spiral bands. These snails often are found on top of vegetation, particularly crops, where they can survive long periods of hot and dry weather without food. They can clog harvesting machinery, contaminate crops, and carry a variety of diseases.

Is it here yet?

No, but it has been here. Mediterranean white snails were detected at the Port of Tacoma in 2005. This population was addressed through joint efforts by the Washington State Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Port of Tacoma. No snails have been detected outside of the port area since.

Why should I care?

Mediterranean white snails eat cereal and legume crops, pasture vegetation, and likely many types of native plants. They go into a dormant stage in the summer, often on top of crops, which can lead to clogging of harvesting machinery and contamination of harvested crops. These snails also can carry plant, animal, and human diseases.

What should I do if I find one?

Report online at www.invasivespecies.wa.gov/report.shtml.

How can we stop it?

This snail is regulated under the federal Plant Protection Act, meaning that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is responsible for taking actions to exclude, eradicate, and control this snail. Importers should examine overseas shipments and report any suspected invasive snails to the Washington State Department of Agriculture.



Photograph courtesy of James D. Young, USDA APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org

What are its characteristics?

- A mature snail is less than 1 inch in diameter.
- The shell has 5-7 convex whorls, which are white or tan in color and usually have dark brown spiral bands.
- The shell's mouth is round with an internal rib, which may be white or brown.

Where do I get more information?

- U.S. Department of Agriculture:
www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/ea/downloads/tacoma_snails_ea6-30-98.pdf

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