

***Helix (Cornu) aspersa* (O.F. Müller, 1774) (Gastropoda: Helicidae) in the Czech Republic**

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The living hibernating population of non native species *Helix (Cornu) aspersa* was found for the first time in the Czech Republic.

Key words: *Helix (Cornu) aspersa*; non-native species; Czech Republic

Introduction

Helix (Cornu) aspersa (O.F. Müller, 1774) is a well known snail species, whose spreading may be due to its use as food-stuff. *H. aspersa* is the dominant species grown in snail farms in the whole Europe. The shell with 4–5 whorls is brownish characteristically interrupted by yellowish bands. The shell size is 30–35×32–40 mm. The aperture is large and characteristically oblique with a reflected white margin, the umbilicus is hidden (Fig. 1). For nomenclature problems see NORDSIECK (2006).

H. aspersa is native in the Mediterranean region including North Africa and probably in the Atlantic coastal regions from Portugal to the Netherlands and the British Isles. It was introduced to the Greece and Asia Minor in classical times (e.g. KERNEY et al. 1983, MIENIS 2007a, b).

During the last few decades *H. aspersa* was introduced round the world (PICKERING 2009). We have occurrence reports from South Africa (SANDERSON & SIRGEL 2002), North and South America (CAPINERA 2001, SAKOVICH 2002), New Zealand (BARKER 1982), and also the Northern and Central parts of Europe. Historically this species was not documented from Sweden (VON PROSCHWITZ 1997) and Austria. Austrian populations have lived near Vienna for more than 30 years (REISCHÜTZ 1978, FISCHER & REISCHÜTZ 1996, REISCHÜTZ & REISCHÜTZ 2000, FISCHER & DUDA 2004). Most probably it was introduced by the trucks of a food supply and spread by means of the mowing mashines of street worker (REISCHÜTZ, pers. comm.). ČEJKA & HORSÁK (unpubl.) found an empty shell in Slovakia (Bratislava – Lamač housing estate).

The list of sites in the Czech Republic

1 – Prague, Holešovice – near the Libeňský most bridge, 50°06'08"N, 14°27'24"E, 6 Sep 2009, L. Juříčková lgt., one ex.; 2 – Prague, the way to the Holešovice port along

Jankovcova Street, 50°05'59"N, 14°27'09"E, 16 Oct 2008, F. Kapounek lgt.; 6 Sep 2009, L. Juříčková lgt., very abundant, many young ex. (see Figs 2–4); 3 – Prague, Holešovice – the playground between Komunardů and Jankovcova Streets, 50°06'01"N, 14°27'03"E, 6 Sep 2009, L. Juříčková lgt., one empty shell; 4 – Prague, Holešovice – Argentinská near gas station; 50°06'00"N, 14°26'31"E, 2 Sep 2009, D. Král lgt., two living ex.; 6 Sep 2009, L. Juříčková lgt., five living ex.



Fig. 1. *Helix (Cornu) aspersa* from Prague – Holešovice.



Fig. 2. (top) and **Fig. 3.** (bottom) *Helix (Cornu) aspersa* aggregations near Jankovcova Street (Prague – Holešovice).

Discussion

The worldwide spreading species *Helix aspersa* (O.F. Müller 1774) was not found for the first time in the Czech Republic. One empty shell was collected by J. Brabenec from Hlubočepy (Prague) fifty years ago (unpublished data), and two living specimens were collected in Mohelno (south Moravia) (DITRICH & KROUPA 1978). However, the Prague population hibernates for the first time in the Czech Republic. The population occurs near Holešovice river port and Holešovice railway station. The possible transportation on trains or ships could be a course of its spreading. Other non-native species co-occur with *H. aspersa* in Holešovice – *Arion lusitanicus* (Mabille 1868), *Monacha cartusiana* (O.F. Müller 1774), and *Cepaea nemoralis* (Linnaeus 1758). Spreading of these species was monitored during last twenty years. Since the number of invasive or non-native molluscs in the Czech Republic is so far relatively small (JUŘIČKOVÁ 2006), we can expect other species in near future.

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Fig. 4. Prague, the way to the Holešovice port along Jankovcova Street – the site of first and very abundant occurrence of *Helix (Cornu) aspersa* in the Czech Republic.

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