

## The search for *Malacolimax tenellus* in 2021

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*Malacolimax tenellus* on *Boletus edulis*.

Rosemary Hill

Ten members of the Wyre Forest Study Group and / or the Conchological Society of Great Britain and Ireland and a visitor met at the Wyre Forest Visitor Centre on 23rd October 2021 to continue the search for the Lemon or Slender Slug *Malacolimax tenellus* in an area of New Parks which had not been surveyed before, along with anything else that might be found. No formal meeting was held in 2020 because of the pandemic but it was concerning that this species was not found during casual solo visits in that very dry year and that the fungi were very scarce. 2021 had a wetter autumn but the ground was still noticeably dry.

The party set off in chilly but fine weather along a track near the boundary with the industrial estate but within the forest. The ground showed signs of a lot of disturbance from human activity (walkers, cyclists and regular felling / replanting of conifers) and there were very few fungi but there was still enough ground vegetation for Cellar Snail *Oxychilus cellarius*, Garlic Snail *O. alliarius* and Large Red Slug *Arion rufus*, Hedgehog Slug *A. intermedius*, Dusky Slug *A. subfuscus*, Worm Slug *Boettgerilla pallens* and the acid woodland indicator Hollowed Glass Snail *Zonitoides excavatus* to be found. A Common Toad *Bufo bufo* was found carefully secreted under a log and the native

land flatworm *Microplana terrestris*. Further down this track within sight of some houses, Rounded Snail *Discus rotundatus* and a Tree Slug *Lehmannia marginata* eating a Butter Cap fungus *Rhodocollybia butyracea*, were added to the list. The first *M. tenellus* was found consuming a *Cortinarius* sp. and three Ash Black Slugs *Limax cinereoniger* were also discovered. There was clearly an increase in the number and species of fungi present showing that Shelf Held Coppice is a lot less disturbed by forestry and human activity than New Parks. A further *M. tenellus* was found in an established mossy area feasting on *Boletus edulis*. Further mollusc records from the dry edge above a calcareous flush in Shelf Held coppice included Long Toothed Herald Snail *Carychium tridentatum*, *Z. excavatus* and *D. rotundatus*. An adjacent calcareous flush produced English Chrysalis Snail *Leiostyla anglica*, Short Toothed Herald Snail *Carychium minimum*, Crystal Snail *Vitrea crystallina*, Clear Glass Snail *Aegopinella pura*, Smooth or Waxy Glass Snail *A. nitidula* and *D. rotundatus*. *L. anglica*; where found in Central and S. England, is considered an indicator of woodland that has never been clear-felled.

It was notable that only two *M. tenellus* (both new site records) were found, whereas years ago the species



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*Aegopinella pura* 4mm.

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*Carychium minimum* 2mm.

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*Vitrea crystallina* 4mm.

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*Leiostyla anglica* 3mm

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was much more abundant in suitable habitat (but two were also found during a visit to Habberley Valley local nature reserve, one of which was feeding on *Mycena pseudocorticola*). It used to be believed that *M. tenellus* had a preference for *Russula* spp. but is willing to eat a wide range of fungi, including the cultivated mushroom *Agaricus bisporus*.

Overall, 131 records from 17 taxonomic groups were obtained from this meeting including 54 species of fungi by John Bingham, who kindly assisted with the naming of fungi being eaten by *M. tenellus*. Thanks are due to Rosemary Winnall for obtaining the permissions to visit the sites and for the contributions and good company of everyone who attended.



WFSG in Shelfeld Coppice

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