left-handed snails

representative specimens

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Mollusca
Class: Gastropoda

Features

A left-handed snail is asymmetrical and has a spiral shell. The opening of the shell is on the left when the spire (point) of the shell is held toward the sky and the opening faces you. A left-handed snail breathes with an internal gill. Each of the two eyes is located at the base of a sensory stalk. The shell is secreted by the mantle.

Natural History

A left-handed snail may be found in any body of water with enough calcium carbonate in the water to allow for shell production. It is often found around vegetation. A left-handed snail lays eggs in gelatinous masses in the water. The eggs are attached to rocks or plants. This snail feeds by scraping algae off plants and other objects in the water with its tongue-like radula, which has teeth. Distribution is presumed to be statewide.

Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; interior rivers and streams; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs; natural lakes and marshes; wet prairies and fens

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001. *Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.