

Slipper Limpet

Species Description

Scientific name: *Crepidula fornicata*

AKA: American Slipper Limpet, Ewin mochyn (Welsh)

Native to: North-east US

Habitat: Wide range of habitats particularly in wave-protected bays, estuaries or sheltered sides of wave-exposed islands

Slipper limpet has a whitish shell, sometimes marked with red patches. They can be variable in shape, but have a high, rounded dome curling towards the aperture, which is large and oval to kidney-shaped. The aperture is half-closed by a characteristic white projecting plate giving the slipper appearance. It normally lives in groups, forming curved chains of up to 15 animals, attached to stones and shells, and on sediment from the shore line that is permanently underwater down to 10m below the water.

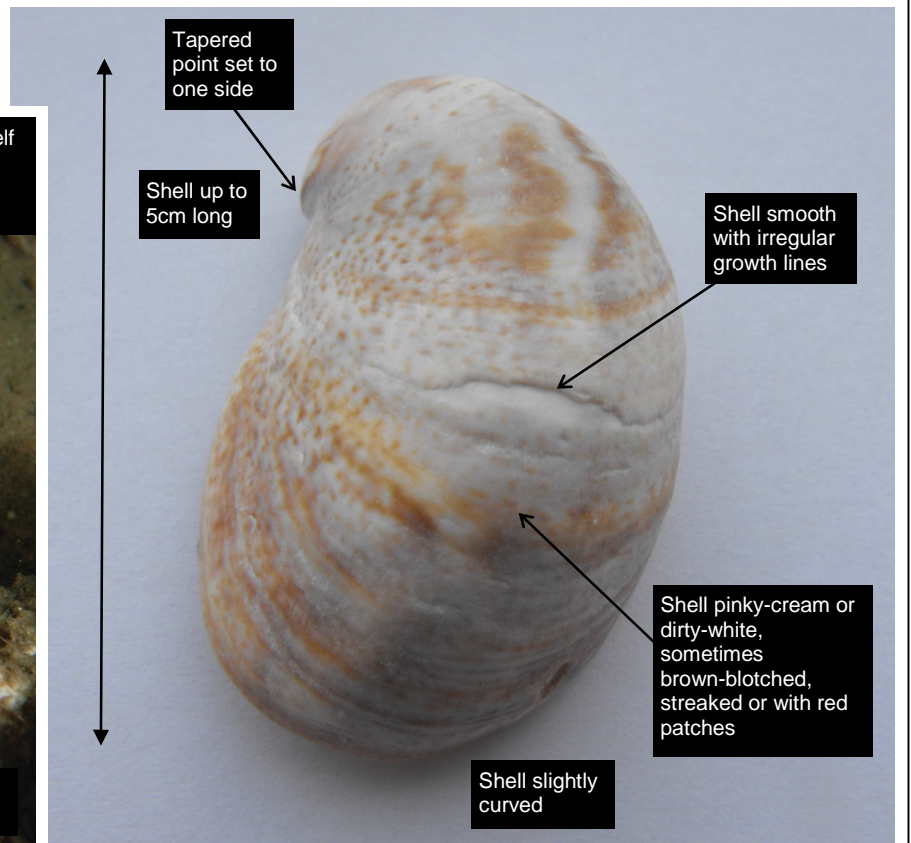
It was discovered in Liverpool Bay in 1872, but this population has since died out. It was subsequently introduced to Essex between 1887 and 1890 with American Oysters *Crassostrea virginica* from north-east USA, it may also have been transported on ships' hulls and in ballast water when it is in the open-water larval phase. Since 1934, it has been found in silt brought into the UK with Dutch oysters, and is now abundant in the whole of the North Sea on oyster and mussel banks. Its numbers are continuing to increase. Slipper limpet competes with, and can displace, other filter-feeding invertebrates. The species can be a serious pest of oyster and mussel beds.

Slipper limpet is listed under Schedule 9 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with respect to England and Wales. As such, it is an offence to plant or otherwise allow this species to grow in the wild.

For details of legislation go to www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation.



Key ID Features



Identification throughout the year

Slipper limpets are present in the same location throughout the year. Open water larval phase is not visible to the naked eye.

Field Signs

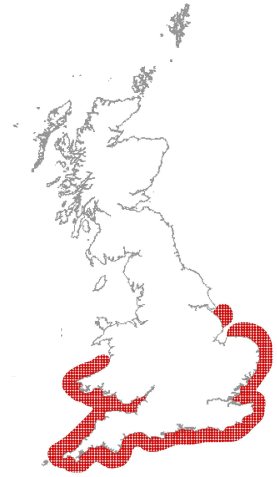
Dead shells are often found on beaches after storms dislodge the limpets.



Distribution

In south-west, south and south-east Britain as far north as Pembrokeshire on the west coast, and Yorkshire on the east coast. Although accidentally introduced to locations in Ireland, no population has persisted.

Source: various

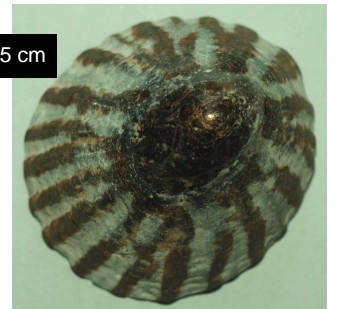
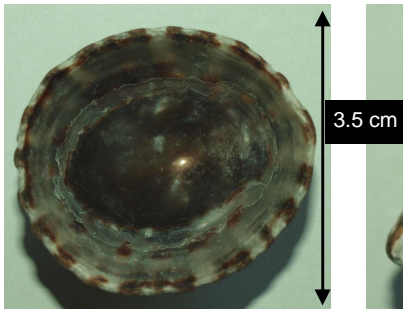


Similar Species

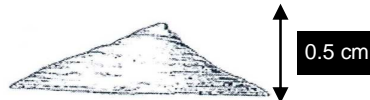
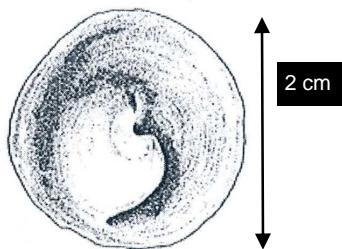
Slipper Limpet
Non-native
(*Crepidula fornicata*)
For comparison



Limpet species
Native
(*Patella* species)



Chinaman's Hat
Native
(*Calyptrea chinensis*)



References and further reading:

Hayward, P., Nelson-Smith, A. and Shields, C. 1996. "Collins Pocket Guide Sea Shore of Britain and Europe". HarperCollins

Marine Life Information Network for Britain and Ireland MarLIN. "Biology and Key Sensitivity Information Web pages". The Marine Biological Association