

# Slipper Limpet

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## Species Description

**Scientific name:** *Crepidula fornicata*

**AKA:** American Slipper Limpet, Common American slippersnail

**Native to:** North-east US

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

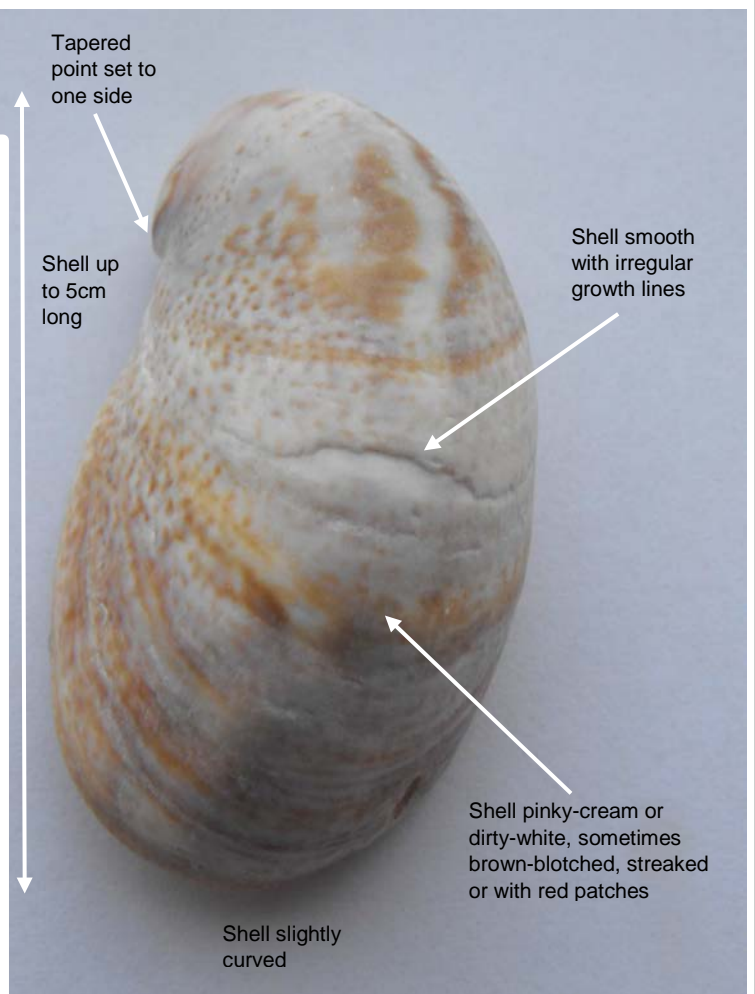
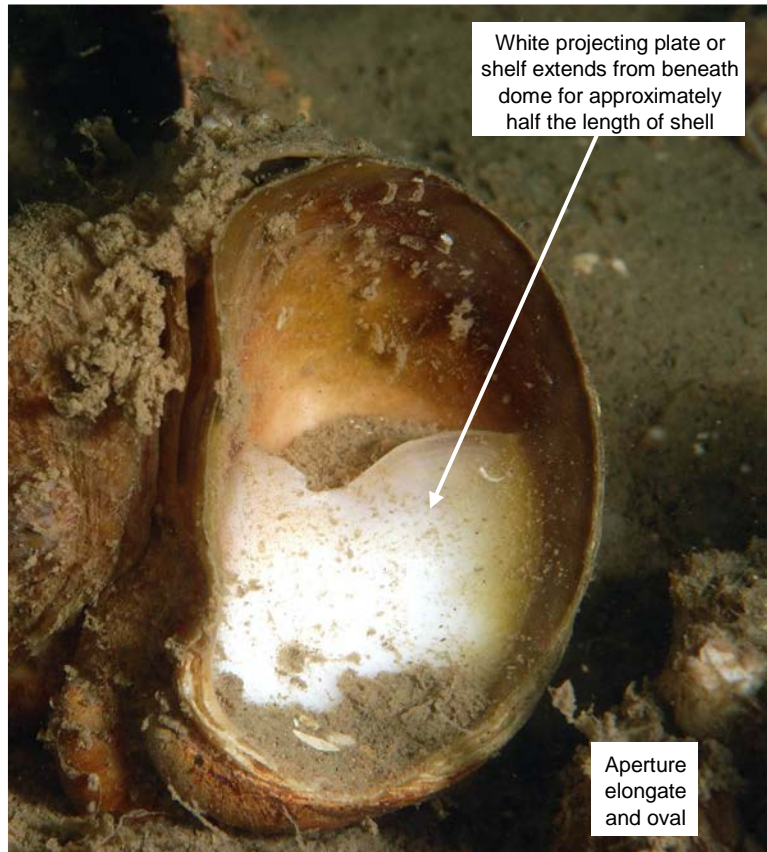
This species has an oval shell, up to 5 cm in length, with a much reduced spire. The large aperture has a shelf, or septum, extending half its length. The shell is smooth with irregular growth lines and white, cream, yellow or pinkish in colour with streaks or blotches of red or brown. Slipper limpets are commonly found in curved chains of up to 12 animals. Large shells are found at the bottom of the chain, with the shells becoming progressively smaller towards the top.

*Crepidula fornicata* is present in Northern Ireland in Belfast Lough and other coastal sites. Other records exist from around Ireland over the last century however, none of these sites are currently thought to be supporting a population. *Crepidula fornicata* most likely arrived in Ireland with consignments of mussels. Other possible pathways include; with consignments of oysters, on drifting materials or due to dispersal of larvae. 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 of The Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 and as such, it is an offence to release or allow this species to escape into the wild.



## Key ID Features



Report any sightings via; CEDaR Online Recording - <https://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI>, iRecord app or Invasive Species Ireland website - <http://invasivespeciesireland.com/report-sighting>

## 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

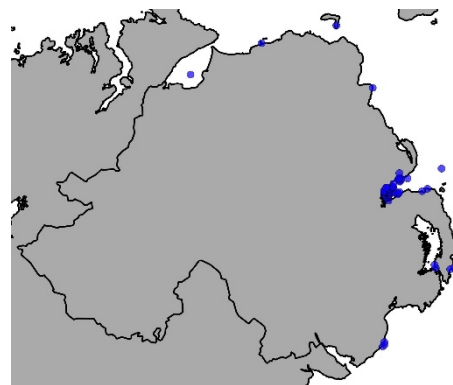
Dead shells are often found on beaches after storms dislodge the limpets.



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<https://www.inaturalist.org/photos/59732206>

## Distribution

Recorded at a number of coastal locations in Northern Ireland.



Source: NBN Atlas Northern Ireland – available at  
<https://northernireland-species.nbnatlas.org/species/NBNSYS0000174750>  
Check website for current distribution

## Similar Species

### Slipper Limpet

Non-native  
(*Crepidula fornicate*)  
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  
Photos from: Steve Trehwella, Vicky Ames

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Adapted for Northern Ireland  
Environment Agency 2020