

## First Record of *Cepaea nemoralis* (Mollusca: Gastropoda) in Bulgaria

VICTOR GASHTAROV

*Bulgaria, Sofia, Suhata reka, bl. 23 ap. 39, vgashtarov@gmail.com*

**Abstract.** The brown-lipped snail *Cepaea nemoralis* (Linnaeus, 1758) has been recorded for the first time in Bulgaria. Eleven individuals – one of them smashed – were found in May and July 2025 in the central part of Sofia city. The place of the only locality indicates that the species was most likely transported accidentally as a souvenir or by chance by a hotel guest or with the soil used for the flowerpot. Considering the conditions and location of the finding, it is questionable whether *C. nemoralis* could have expanded its geographical range.

**Key words:** distribution, introduced species, Helicidae, Sofia, Bulgaria, urban environments.

On 11 May 2025, a vivid yellow crushed specimen of the genus *Cepaea* was found on the stairs of a large hotel in central Sofia, opposite the building of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria. After careful inspection, it was identified as *Cepaea nemoralis*. Upon further inspection of the site, 10 more living specimens of the same species were found in a flowerpot at the entrance, including on the stem of the potted pine tree (Fig. 1).

The discovery of the species in question represents a new genus and a new species for the malacofauna of Bulgaria. It has not been listed in the checklist of the Bulgarian terrestrial snails (Dedov 1998).

The native distribution of *C. nemoralis* is from Western and Northern Europe to Central Europe, but it has been spreading eastwards, especially over the last few decades. The distributional range covers most of the Iberian Peninsula, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, southern Sweden and Norway, Switzerland, Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Bosnia, Croatia, and the northern half of Italy. In Central and Eastern Europe, it has spread particularly along the Baltic coast (e.g. in Poland, Latvia, Estonia, southern Finland, the east coast of Sweden) but also now elsewhere in Poland, Ukraine, Belarus and Russia (Dvořák *et al.* 2003; Ožgo *et al.* 2019; Cadevall & Orozco 2016; Juříčková *et al.* 2001; Peltanová *et al.* 2012; I. Balashov & Markova 2021; Gural-Sverlova 2023). The species was found in Russia (Egorov 2008). Central Romania, Sibiu (Gheoca 2018), is the locality closest to Bulgaria. The species has also been introduced to North America, including the USA and Canada (Whitson 2005).

The location of the only locality indicates that the species was most likely transported accidentally as a souvenir or by chance by a hotel guest or with the soil used for the flowerpot. Considering the conditions and location of the finding, it is questionable whether *C. nemoralis* could have expanded its geographical range.



**Fig. 1.** *Cepaea nemoralis* from Sofia city.

## References

- Balashov, I. & Markova, A. (2021). The first records of an invasive land snail *Cepaea nemoralis* (Stylommatophora: Helicidae) in Central and Southern Ukraine. *Ruthenica*, 31 (3): 121-125.
- Cadevall, J. & Orozco, A. (2016) *Caracoles y babosas de la Península Ibérica y Baleares*. Barcelona, Omega, 1500 pp.
- Dedov, I. 1998. Annotated check-list of the Bulgarian terrestrial snails (Mollusca, Gastropoda). *Linzer biologische Beiträge*, 30 (2): 745-765.
- Dvořák, L., Honěk, A. & Martínková, Z. (2003). The spread of *Cepaea nemoralis* (L.) populations in the Czech Republic. *2003 BCPC Symposium proceedings No. 80: Slugs & snails: agricultural, veterinary & environmental perspectives*: 99-102.
- Egorov, R. (2008) *Illustrated catalogue of the recent terrestrial molluscs of Russia and adjacent regions*. Treasure of Russian Shells Supplement 5. Moscow: Colus. 180 p.
- Gheoca, V. (2018) The first record of *Cepaea nemoralis* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Stylommatophora: Helicidae) from Romania. *Acta Zoologica Bulgarica*, 70(1): 129-132.
- Juříčková, L.; Horsák, M. & Beran, L. (2001) Check-list of the molluscs (Mollusca) of the Czech Republic. *Acta Soc. Zool. Bohem.*, 65: 25-40.
- Gural-Sverlova, N. (2023) Two Introduced *Cepaea* Species (Gastropoda, Helicidae) in Ternopil, Western Ukraine, and Specifics of Their Phenotypic Composition. *Zoodiversity*, 57(6): 507-520.
- Ożgo, M., Cameron, R.A.D., Horsák, M., Pokryszko, B., Chudaś, M., Cichy, A., Kaczmarek, S., Kobak, J., Marzec, M., Mierzwa-Szymkowiak, D., Parzonko, D., Pyka, G., Rosin, Z., Skawina, A., Soroka, M., Sulikowska-Drozd, A., Surowiec, T., Szymanek, M.,

- Templin, J., Urbańska, M., Zajac, K., Zielska, J., Żbikowska, E. & Żoładek, J. (2019) *Cepaea nemoralis* (Gastropoda: Pulmonata) in Poland: patterns of variation in a range-expanding species. *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society*, 127 (1): 1-11.
- Peltanová, A., Dvořák, L. & Juříčková, L. (2012) The spread of non-native *Cepaea nemoralis* and *Monacha cartusiana* (Gastropoda: Pulmonata) in the Czech Republic with comments on other land snail immigrants. *Biologia*, 67 (2): 384-389.
- Whitson, M. (2005) *Cepaea nemoralis* (Gastropoda, Helicidae): The invited invader. *Journal of the Kentucky Academy of Science*, 66 (2): 82-88.