



As early as 1855, Robert Kennicott, who two years later would be one of the co-founders of the Chicago Academy of Sciences, gave a first account of some snails and clams found in the Chicago area. In 1898 and 1901, the curator at the Academy, Frank C. Baker, published a comprehensive account of the mollusks of Chicago and its environs, which is the baseline of our knowledge of the snails, slugs, clams, and mussels in the city and its suburbs. The city's population of about 30,000 in 1850 had grown to 1.7 million by the turn of the 20th century. Still, in 1900, many more habitats remained relatively untouched by human activity in the area now comprising the city of Chicago compared with what may be found today. Since then, population pressure, industry, traffic, pollution, and invasive species have claimed or severely altered those remnants of Chicago's original landscape. Accordingly, the snails and slugs living in the city have changed, with some species having disappeared while other, often non-native species, have made the city their home. Chicago's changing mollusk fauna is documented in the collections of the Field Museum and the Chicago Academy of Sciences.

This guide presents a selection of Chicago's land snails and slugs, including those most likely to be encountered in the city and adjacent suburbs. There are many additional species in the area. If you find a snail or slug you can't match to the images in this guide, take some pictures from several angles and send them to mollguide@fieldmuseum.org to find out what it is.

"!" denotes introduced species



Zonitoides arboreus
quick gloss
width: 4-6 mm



Xolotrema fosteri
bladetooth wedge
width: 14-18 mm



Hawaiiia minuscula
minute gem
width: 2-2.5 mm



! *Oxychilus draparnaudi*
dark-bodied glass-snail
width: 12-15 mm



Anguispira alternata
flamed tigersnail
width: 15-20 mm



! *Cepaea nemoralis*
grovesnail
width: 18-25 mm
Many different color variations. Known from gardens in Chicago's Lakeview and Hyde Park neighborhoods.



Vallonia costata
costate vallonia
width: 2-2.5 mm



Vallonia pulchella
lovely vallonia
width: 2-2.5 mm



Mediappendix vermeta
suboval ambersnail
length: 6-13 mm

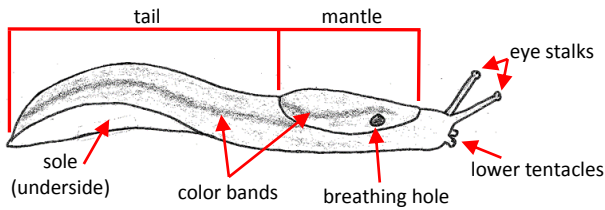


Gastrocopta armifera
armed snaggletooth
length: 4-4.7 mm

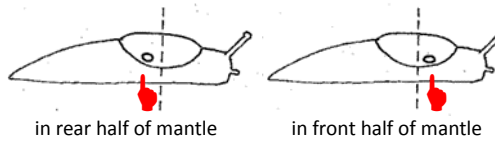


Cochlicopa lubrica
glossy pillar
length: 5-6.5 mm

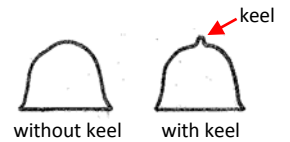
Slug terminology and diagnostic features



Position of breathing hole
(indicated by ↓)



cross sections
(rear half of body)



Philomycus carolinianus

Carolina mantleslug

mantle covers entire back; found in mature woods only, not in disturbed areas



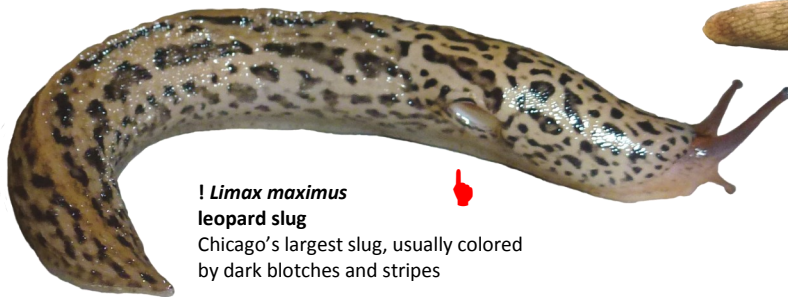
Deroceras laeve

meadow slug

small and watery, mantle equal to or longer than tail, secretes clear mucus when disturbed



At the turn of the 20th century, only two native slug species were known to live in Chicago: *Deroceras laeve* and *Philomycus carolinianus*. While *D. laeve* can still be found in moist situations near water bodies or in wet woods, *P. carolinianus* has not been seen in the city of Chicago in many decades. A considerable number of non-native slugs have, however, found their way to the Windy City and today dominate the slug fauna. All photographs on this page are approximately actual size.



! *Limax maximus* leopard slug

Chicago's largest slug, usually colored by dark blotches and stripes



typical



pale



patterned

! *Deroceras reticulatum* gray fieldslug

mantle shorter than tail, secretes milky mucus when disturbed; the most serious garden pest-slug



! *Ambigolimax valentianus* threeband garden slug

slender, with faint color bands high on the sides



! *Tandonia kusceri* Kuscer's keeled slug

lighter colored keel from rear end all the way to the mantle

In the Chicago area, so far only known from the Brookfield suburb.



! *Arion subfuscus* dusky arion

colored in brown and orange tones, usually (not always) with darker bands, mucus on back orange (colorless in other arions; gently rub the slug's back with your finger to find out mucus color)

The very similar Northern dusky slug (*Arion fuscus*) has also been found in Chicago; dissection is necessary for identification.



color variations



! *Arion fasciatus* rusty false-keeled slug

colored in gray, brown and yellow tones, with dark bands, line of lighter colored tubercles in middle of back gives false appearance of keel, mucus on back colorless



! *Arion hortensis* garden arion

small, dark gray with black bands, sole orange

