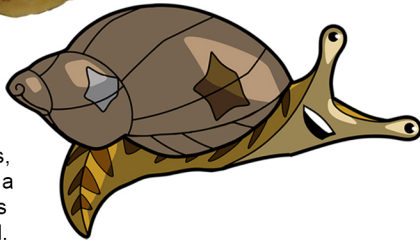


Hawai'i's State Snails

Kenneth A. Hayes and Norine W. Yeung, Bishop Museum, Honolulu

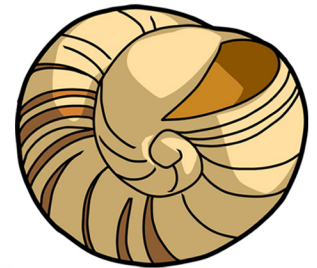
Hawai'i is considered an invertebrate biodiversity hotspot because of its unusually high number of native species. Its native land snails, or kāhuli, embody this diversity with 759 recognized species, 99.9% of which are endemic (species found only in Hawai'i). Sadly, a vast majority of these species are threatened or already extinct. Kāhuli hold ecological significance in native Hawaiian ecosystems due to their role as nutrient cyclers and decomposers, breaking down dead or decaying material to provide plant life with nutrient-rich soil. They are also a food source for our other native species such as *Hyposmocoma molluscivora*, the carnivorous moth native to Maui and O'ahu, and for native forest birds such as the Po'ouli, *Melamprosops phaeosoma*, a native honeycreeper. Kāhuli serve an important role in the Hawaiian culture through mele (song), hula, mo'olelo (story), 'oli (chant), and as symbols for romance and good omens. The snails' voices were signifiers of positive events or affirmations for certain decisions. They are described as the singing snails, representing the voice of the forest.

To bring attention to the plight of Hawai'i's snails, 2023 was declared Year of the Kāhuli in Hawai'i. In 2024, Hawai'i's Governor signed into law House Bill 1899, designating nine snails to represent each of the main Hawaiian Islands and the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. These snails were selected by the community and represent the diversity of snails in Hawai'i and the unique flora and fauna of each island.



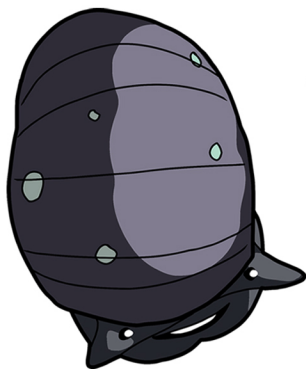
Hawai'i

Succinea konaensis Sykes, 1897: One of the species in a distinct lineage of succineids only found on Hawai'i Island. Although the name indicates it's from Kona, it has been recorded from Kona, Ka'ū, Hilo, and Mauna Kea. Unlike many of the remaining succineids, this species is primarily found on the ground. Conservation status of this species: **Imperiled**.



Kaho'olawe

Pleuropoma laciniosa kahoowawensis Neal, 1934: This terrestrial species belongs to the family Helicinidae, a group more closely related to marine snails than to other land snails. There is only one species and one subspecies known to be endemic to Kaho'olawe. Unfortunately, this species is currently considered extinct. There have been no recent surveys on this island and our hope is that at least one of these is still living.



Kaua'i

Erinna newcombi H. Adams & A. Adams, 1855: This freshwater snail is found only on Kaua'i, exclusively in seepy, vertical wetland habitats adjacent to waterfalls. It is the first and only Hawaiian freshwater snail listed under the Endangered Species Act. Conservation status of this species: **Vulnerable**.



Lāna'i

Auriculella lanaiensis Cooke, 1915: This is the only *Auriculella* species found on Lāna'i. This small snail (5 mm in shell height) can still be found on Lāna'i'ihale, but it is only known from two small sites. Conservation status of this species: **Near Vulnerable**.





Maui

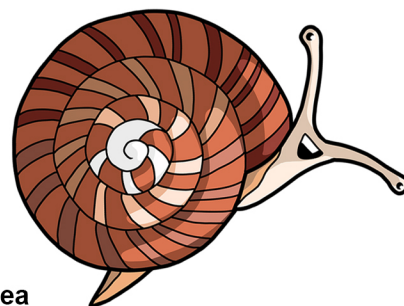
Lyropupa striatula

(Pease, 1871): This genus is endemic to the Hawaiian Islands, and all species were thought to be extinct until it was recently rediscovered on Maui. The beautiful shell ridges are characteristic of this genus. This species is dependent on the decaying leaf litter of native trees. Conservation status of this species: **Critically Imperiled**.

Moloka'i

Laminella venusta

(Mighels, 1845): This species was thought extinct, but rediscovered in 2018. It is extremely rare, but where it leaves, it can be found cleaning the leaves of olonā (*Touchardia latifolia*). Conservation status of this species: **Imperiled**.



Ni'ihau

Homalopoma verruca

(Gould, 1845): Ni'ihau is known for their Ni'ihau marine shell lei. Although there are several species used for lei and none are endemic to the Hawaiian Islands, *Homalopoma verruca* stands out by being described from Hawai'i. Additionally, these shells are known as Kahelelani (royal going; name of first chief of Ni'ihau). These shells were worn by chiefs and as the smallest of Ni'ihau shells, they were the most difficult to make into lei and became one of the most precious shells from Ni'ihau. Conservation status of this species: **Stable**.

Northwestern Hawaiian Islands - Papahānaumokuākea

Endodonta christenseni

Slapcinsky, Yeung & Hayes, 2020: The last known living *Endodonta* species is found only on Nihoa. Once this species goes extinct, the entire genus will be gone. It has flame-like patterns on its shell that is typical among *Endodonta* species, of which there were once eleven. Conservation status of this species: **Critically Imperiled**.

O'ahu

Kaala subrutila (Mighels, 1845):

This species, the only species in the genus ("monotypic"), is only found on and named after the highest point of O'ahu, Mt. Ka'ala. *Kaala subrutila* is one of the few remaining ground-dwelling snails that occasionally can be found on shrubs and ferns but is primarily found in the leaf litter, where it contributes to nutrient turnover. Conservation status of this species: **Near Vulnerable**.

