

THE GLOBALLY INVASIVE *PARALAOMA SERVILIS* (GASTROPODA: PUNCTIDAE) REPORTED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN BELGIUM

Paralaoma servilis (Shuttleworth, 1852) is believed to originate from New Zealand. It is considered a tramp species and is now widespread in Oceania, South America, North America, Africa and Europe (Wronski & Hausdorf, 2010; Christensen *et al.*, 2011; Welter-Schultes, 2012).

In Belgium, *P. servilis* was found for the first time on October 19th 2014 in Turnhout (51°19'36"N; 4°55'44"E). A second population was found on November 10th 2014 in Brussels (50°50'36"N; 4°21'41"E), approximately 67km southwest of the first locality (Fig. 1). All ten specimens collected in Turnhout were found on an iron fence between a lawn and a road near the town centre. In Brussels, twelve *P. servilis* were collected from a strip of bark in the Warandepark (Parc de Bruxelles), a city park in a highly urbanised area.

Although Welter-Schultes (2012) included Belgium in his distribution maps, earlier Belgian finds of *P. servilis* than those reported here could not be traced. However, the species may have been overlooked for a long time, since it has firmly established populations in the neighbouring countries and it is known to occur at several localities close to the Belgian border (Neckheim & Majoor, 2013). Indeed, *P. servilis* could easily be missed during visual surveys due to its small size (max. 2mm). Also, it may have been confused with small native species that have a similar ribbed shell sculpture, such as *Punctum pygmaeum* and juvenile *Vallonia costata* (Welter-Schultes, 2012). Consequently, *P. servilis* may already be more widespread than the reported finds suggest.

Both Belgian localities are situated in urbanized areas with well maintained gardens and parks. Therefore, it is likely that *P. servilis* was unintentionally introduced with garden plants. Introduction by horticultural activity has been suggested by Schmid (2002) and is considered an important introduction pathway of other recent additions to the Belgian molluscan fauna (Van den Neucker & Scheers, 2014). Since *P. servilis* has been reported from a variety of habitats (Neckheim & Majoor, 2013), it can be expected to rapidly expand its range within

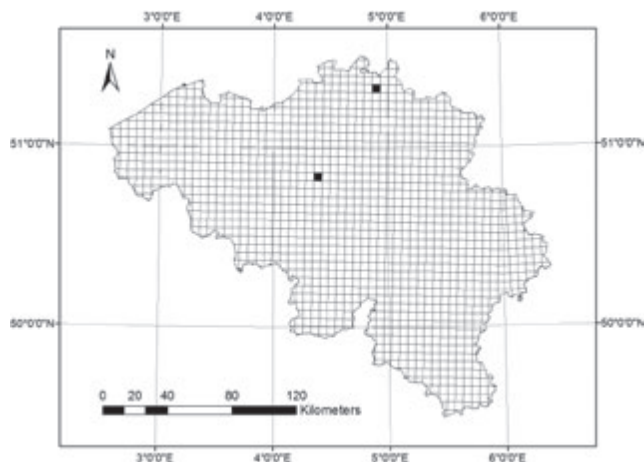


Figure 1 Recorded distribution up to November 10th 2014 of *P. servilis* in Belgium on a 5km UTM grid.

Belgium. So far, there are no reports of adverse effects of *P. servilis* on native fauna and flora in Europe or elsewhere.

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