

A THIRD LOCALITY FOR *HELICELLA (H.) VALDEONA* (GASTROPODA: HYGROMIIDAE)

Helicella (H.) valdeona (Gittenberger & Manga, 1977) was first recognised as a species distinct from *H. (H.) itala* (L., 1758) on the basis of anatomical and conchological characters displayed by specimens collected in the vicinity of Santa Marina de Valdeón, Province of León, northern Spain. The validity of the taxon remained in doubt by various authors including Manga (1983) and Puente (1994) for some twenty-five years until the subsequent discovery of further specimens in the Picos de Europa at Fuente Dé, Province of Cantabria, (Gittenberger & Carr, 2002). No further occurrences of *H. (H.) valdeona* appear to have been reported and the species is currently denoted as Vulnerable D2 on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (Gómez, 2013).

An excursion to northern Spain undertaken during May 2015 confirmed that the species remains relatively abundant on low herbage along the south facing mountain slopes at Fuente Dé, to the north of the Parador Hotel. A further discovery of *H. (H.) valdeona* was also made alongside the N621 road, where twelve snails were collected from roadside herbage to the southwest of Portilla de Reina, Province of León (map reference MTN50 349 4765). The Portilla de Reina specimens closely resembled but were smaller than those originally collected at Fuente Dé, shell dimensions ranging between 8.2–9.8mm in height and 12.5–14.2mm in width (n=6) compared with a height of 8.5–11.2mm and width of 14.3–18.6mm in the Fuente Dé specimens (n=9). The average height-to-width ratio of shells from each locality was 1.5. Snails collected from Portilla de Reina were sexually mature and on dissection were observed to exhibit very close anatomical similarity with the Fuente Dé specimens in the length of the flagellum and the triangular shape of the bursa copulatrix, characters which were considered diagnostic for separation

of *H. (H.) valdeona* from *H. (H.) itala sensu lato* by Gittenberger and Manga (1977).

Portilla de Reina is located approximately 11.25km south of Santa Marina de Valdeón and approximately 12.5km southwest of Fuente Dé. The discovery of a third locality for *H. (H.) valdeona* represents an extension in the known range of the species, which may occur more widely in hitherto uninvestigated localities within northern Spain. Gómez (2013) cites the most significant threats to the species as grazing and fires, though the Fuente Dé colony is located within a National Park which is the highest form of protection to natural areas of Spain. The habitat of *H. (H.) valdeona* at Portilla de Reina is, however, outside the boundary of the National Park and consequently vulnerable to destruction through itinerant tipping, development or fire.

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