

Slipper Limpet

Crepidula fornicata

Invasive: High impact

Species profile

- Habitat:** Marine
- Distribution in Ireland:** Localised in Belfast Lough.
- Status:** Established. First recorded viable population in Ireland was in 2009.
- Family name:** Calyptraeidae.
- Reproduction:** Attach to each other to form chains which allows them to reproduce quickly. Females produce 200,000 eggs a year in Northern Europe. Solitary individuals may become self-fertile.

Identifying features

- Colour:** The shell, which can be up to 5cm in length can vary from cream/white to yellow and even pinkish with red or brown blotches.
- Grouping:** Slipper limpets attach to one another with older, larger female individuals at the bottom and smaller male specimens on top.
- Attachment:** The species attaches to objects with its muscular foot.
- Conditions:** Can survive several days in cool, damp conditions.



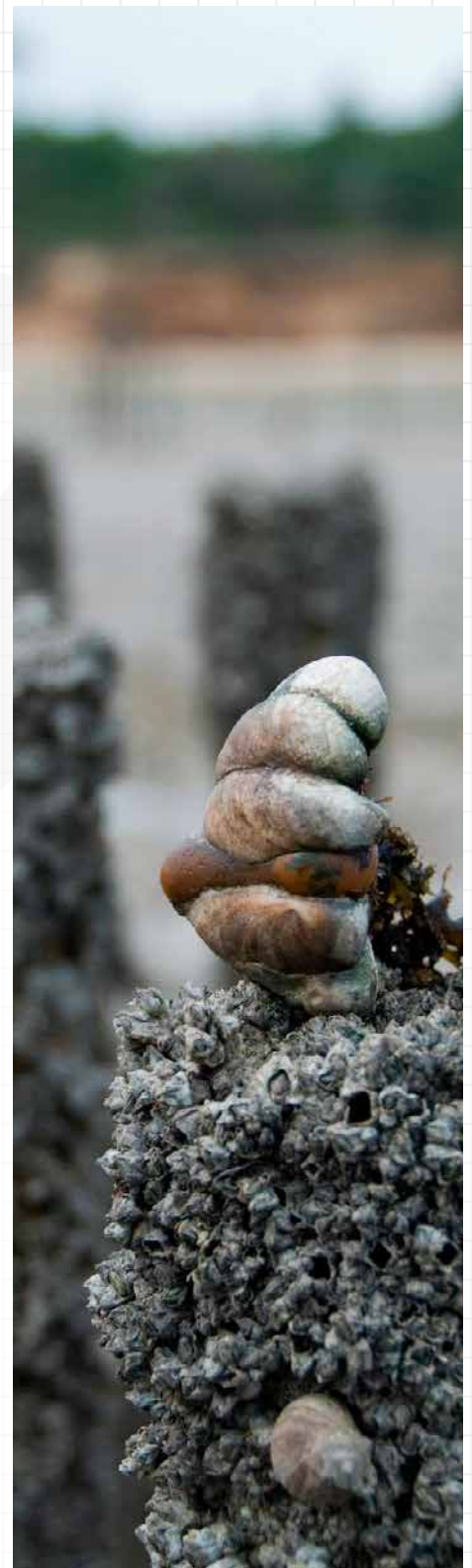
Cream colouring with darker markings showing growth lines and a curved shell

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Showing the tapering of the shell to a single point

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Slipper limpet showing chain formation which aids with reproduction - Crown © GBNNSS



Slipper Limpet

Threats

Can compete with oysters for food.

Can form dense colonies along the sea bed causing changes to the sediment structure.

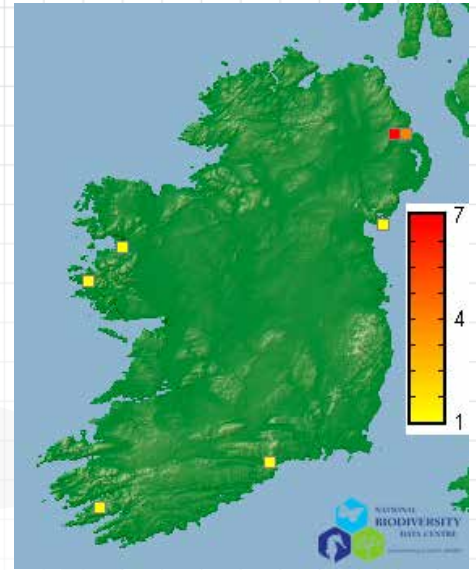
High densities can cause sediment change to faeces, pseudofaeces and shell drift, which can impact negatively on existing flora diversity.

Their clustered formations on the sea bed can also smother bottom dwelling species.

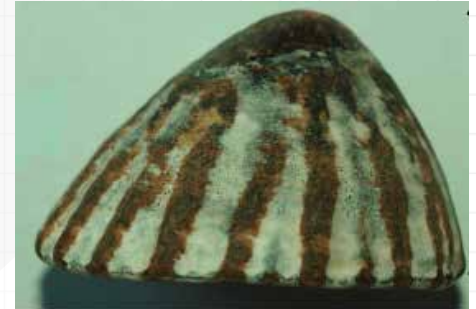
Similar species

Native limpets (*Patella* species) have both a different shape and colouring to the invasive slipper limpet.

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Distribution of the slipper limpet in Ireland, the coloured scale bar indicates the density of records (Biodiversity Maps)



Other native limpet species have both a different shape and colouration © GBNNSS



Common limpet (*Patella vulgata*) covered in barnacles but still easily distinguishable from the slipper limpet © O. Duffy



Slipper limpet showing various colours and curved shell - Crown © GBNNSS

