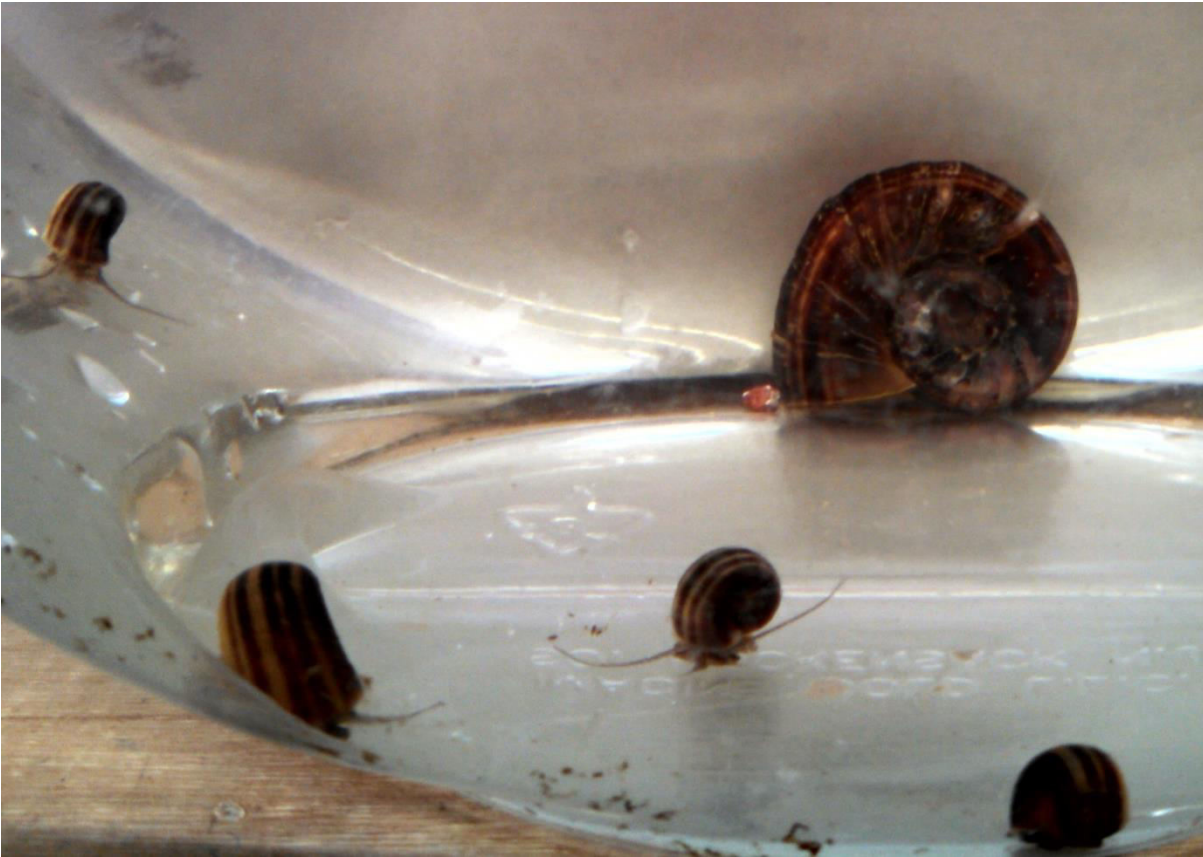


# COLUMBIAN STRIPED RAMSHORN SNAIL, *Marisa cornuarietis*

by Chase Klinesteker SWAM, Nov-Dec, 2016



Adult (1 ½ inches) and young Columbian Ranshorn Snails

One must be careful when adding snails to their aquariums. They can be helpful in our fishkeeping, but also, we must be aware of problems they may have. This is true of the Columbian Striped Ramshorn Snail. It is an attractive snail (yellowish shell with brown stripes) of good size (1 ½ inches) that scavenges well, including decaying plant parts, dead fish, and leftover foods, converting them to less toxic substances. It will also eat softer plants, hair algae, and duckweed, which makes them useful in certain instances. However, if they are starved with no softer plants or other foods available, they will eat harder plants, including anubias! They have a voracious appetite and have been introduced in some Florida lakes to control invasive Hydrilla. I have used them to clean hair algae off harder plants like anubias. Just don't leave it too long there and starve the snails, or the anubias will be gone also!

## CARE

These snails will survive under a variety of water conditions, but soft, acid water will cause mottled shells to form, and even death. This is because of the lack of water hardness and lime needed to form their shells. Water changes and adding seashells to an aquarium will help condition the water. As mentioned before, they will eat just about anything, especially plants, but if one does not have plants to feed them, leaves can be added for them to consume. They are tropical and come from Columbia, Brazil, and Venezuela, needing

warmer temperatures to breed (around 80 degrees). I have found them quite helpful in raising shrimp, as you can feed extra food or pellets to the shrimp and be assured it will be quickly cleaned up by the snails. Always be aware of the bioload in any aquarium. Excess numbers of snails produce large amounts of waste also, polluting the tank. The best way to reduce the snail population in a tank is to place a slice of cucumber, potato, etc. on the bottom, wait a few hours, and it will be covered with snails, then remove and discard. If you have puffers, loaches, large cichlids, or other snail eating fish, all the better. The Columbian Ramshorn Snail is a relative of the Apple Snail and has a trap door but does not breathe air. Because it reaches a fairly large size, they need to be monitored closely and removed if dead, as that can quickly pollute an entire aquarium. It has extra-long "horns" that gracefully wave in the water, making it more susceptible to harassing by many species of fish, including guppies.

## **REPRODUCTION**

The Columbian Ramshorn Snail does not seem as prolific as the smaller Red Ramshorn or many other snails. They require both male and female and warmer temperatures to reproduce, are susceptible to harassing by fish, and the newly hatched snails seem vulnerable to predation. This can be an advantage over other snails. The eggs are fairly large (2-3 mm.) and may number up to 200 in a mass, but they are translucent and sometimes difficult to see. They are often laid on the glass near the surface or on hard plants. If one wishes to raise more of these snails, it would be best to remove the eggs and hatch them separately. Before acquiring any snails, it is best to check to see if keeping them is restricted in your area, and never release them into local waters.