

Marsh snails in Boundary Bay by George P. Holm

It was the middle of April, the first sunny and warm weekend of the year. I decided to spend it checking on and photographing the marsh snails I have located over the years in Boundary Bay.

The two days could not have been more pleasant. I savored in its warmth while thinking back to the previous Sunday when Linda Schroeder and I had driven through a snow covered landscape in Sedro Woolley that reminded us of a movie scene of a wintery Vermont. We were going that day to check on beaches on the Olympic Peninsula for the club field trip in June. But I digress, as I have been known to do.

The first area I looked at was Beach Grove in Tsawwassen. There is a parking area at 12th Ave. and a trail leads from it into a park that extends along the shoreline to Maple or Centennial Beach near the Point Roberts border. The area that I wanted to check on that day was a salt marsh at the beginning of the park. I was looking for the introduced snail *Myosotella myosotis* (Draparnaud, 1801) and also the smaller native snail *Assimineea californica* (Tryon, 1865). Both these species like *Salicornia* marshes, mud and being under wood debris. This area had plenty of the first two and I did not have much difficulty in locating them.

I have previously found the land snail, *Oxychilus draparnaudi* (Beck, 1837), under wood debris close to the edge of the salt marsh where it meets the dike. I did not see it there that day, but later I located a colony of them on the other side of the dike under a slice of a tree trunk. *O. draparnaudi* is the largest of the introduced *Oxychilus* species.

The next area of interest was Mud Bay Park in Surrey, located at the northeastern end of Boundary Bay by the mouth of the Serpentine River. There I found one specimen of *Cecina manchurica* A. Adams, 1861 under a piece of drift bark. Under some logs further in from the shore I found *Vespericola columbiana columbiana* (Lea, 1838). This is the species most often encountered near the shore at this end of the bay. A little further in from the shore *Vespericola columbiana pilosa* Henderson, 1928 becomes the species that one will see and it can be found where the habitat is suitable around the bay.

The tide was out that day, but should one walk onto the exposed shoreline then they would quickly find out why this end of the bay is named Mud Bay.



Google Image map of Boundary Bay.
1. Beach Grove. 2. Mud Bay Park. 3. Blackies Spit.



Top left - *Myosotella myosotis* (Draparnaud, 1801)
Top right - *Assimineea californica* (Tryon, 1865)
Bottom - *Oxychilus draparnaudi* (Beck, 1837)



Above - Mud Bay Park. 2 on map.
Left - *Vespericola columbiana columbiana* (Lea, 1838)
Right - *Cecina manchurica* A. Adams, 1861



width 5 mm.

Above - Blackie's Spit showing the salt marsh. **3** on map.
Right - *Littorina subrotundata* (Carpenter, 1864)

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