



Community-driven survey of land snails in three communal conservation areas in East Kwaio, Malaita, Solomon Islands

Frank Köhler¹ , Jackson Waneagea², SaleLaefi², Betefanalamo², Ifibata², Luke Susufia², Ledison Fa`amae², David Esau², Fiaringi Made`e², Alex Fo`ori², Calvin Jimmy², Siosi Meke², Peter Alabai², Masafi Alabai², Kobu John², Gibson Ipa², James Kukiabo², Wilson Langa², Asuari`i Kwaiofo², Dobata Mongabo², Bukele Alabai², Fane`eri`i Laete`esafi², John Laete`esafi², Harrison Nominiti², Jeverlyn Gesia², Raymond Guleabe`u², Tagwa Laete`esafi², Julie Esau², Telegeni Laete`esafi², Mamaniyasusu Maabo², Dickson Kwaiofo², DyLin Tome², Mageni Laete`esafi², Deamae Alafata², Kwa`ikwala Alick², Dorothy Esau², Esau Kekeubata², John Waneata², David MacLaren³ 

¹ Corresponding author: Australian Museum, 1 William St, Sydney NSW 2010, Australia.

² Kwainaa`isi Cultural Centre and Baru Conservation Alliance, Malaita, Solomon Islands.

³ James Cook University, Cairns, Qld 4870, Australia.

Abstract. In collaboration with the Kwainaa`isi Cultural Centre and Baru Conservation Alliance, we undertook a survey of the land snails of East Kwaio, Malaita, Solomon Islands with emphasis on the species inventory of land snails in three communal conservation reserves. This report is based on three visits to the region in April 2019 and November 2023. We conducted collective visual searches at five main survey sites recording 36 species of land snails based on morphological examinations. We collected 186 sample vouchers that are deposited in the malacological collection of the Australian Museum as resource for on-going taxonomic research aimed at an enhanced documentation of the land snail fauna of Malaita. Considering an inevitable sampling bias, we conclude that the land snail faunas of all three conservation sites are rather similar and that collectively the three reserves contain a representative fraction of the overall land snail diversity in central Malaita. Therefore, the reserves fulfil their intended role of preserving Malaita's land snail species for the future.

Introduction

The Solomon Islands consist of six large (>500 km²) and more than 900 smaller islands to the southeast of Papua New Guinea. The land snail fauna of this archipelago has only recently been catalogued more comprehensively by Delsaerdt (2010; 2012; 2016) in a small series of books,

which summarize the taxonomic accounts and descriptions of taxa that are scattered through the taxonomic literature published over the course of nearly two centuries. Owing to the lack of modern study, however, our concepts of many species are largely hypothetical as they are frequently known from historical shell-based accounts only, which often were

Keywords: Terrestrial invertebrate, community similarity, community dissimilarity, Gastropoda

ORCID: Frank Köhler, 0000-0001-7150-6509; David MacLaren, 0000-0002-3021-5518

Corresponding author: Frank Köhler **Email:** frank.koehler@australian.museum

Received: 26 March 2026 **Accepted:** 4 May 2026 **Published:** 20 May 2025 (online only)

Publisher: The Australian Museum, Sydney, Australia (a statutory authority of, and principally funded by, the NSW State Government)

Citation: Köhler, F., J. Waneagea, SaleLaefi, Betefanalamo, Ifibata, Susufia, Fa`amae, Esau, Made`e, Fo`ori, Jimmy, Meke, Alabai, Alabai, John, Ipa, Kukiabo, Langa, Kwaiofo, Mongabo, Alabai, Laete`esafi, Laete`esafi, Nominiti, Gesia, Guleabe`u, Laete`esafi, Esau, Laete`esafi, Maabo, Kwaiofo, Tome, Laete`esafi, Alafata, Alick, Esau, Kekeubata, Waneata, MacLaren. 2026. Community-driven survey of land snails in three communal conservation areas in East Kwaio, Malaita, Solomon Islands. *Technical Reports of the Australian Museum* 44: 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.3853/j.1835-4211.44.2026.3014>

Copyright: © 2026 Köhler, Waneagea, SaleLaefi, Betefanalamo, Ifibata, Susufia, Fa`amae, Esau, Made`e, Fo`ori, Jimmy, Meke, Alabai, Alabai, John, Ipa, Kukiabo, Langa, Kwaiofo, Mongabo, Alabai, Laete`esafi, Laete`esafi, Nominiti, Gesia, Guleabe`u, Laete`esafi, Esau, Laete`esafi, Maabo, Kwaiofo, Tome, Laete`esafi, Alafata, Alick, Esau, Kekeubata, Waneata, MacLaren. This is an open access article licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original authors and source are credited.

