



Littoridinops tenuipes (Couper 1844) henscomb hydrobe



Taxonomy & Systematics. The Hydrobiidae is a diverse group in the worldwide Superfamily Rissoacea - prosobranch gastropods typically small in body size, shallow or even amphibious in their habit, bearing cusps around the base of their median radular tooth. Sexes are separate in almost all cases, eggs being laid singly and attached in a spare capsule to solid substrates. The penis arises from the neck. Hydrobiids are distinguished from their two sister groups in freshwater, the Bithyniidae and the Pomatiopsidae, by the calcareous operculum of the former and the amphibious life habit of the latter.

Littoridinops is a member of the hydrobiid subfamily Cochliopinae. Its penis is fringed with numerous papillae, strikingly different from other hydrobiids of the American southeast. Adult shell length around 2 - 3 mm.

Habitat & Distribution. This is an easily-overlooked inhabitant of an environment that can be difficult to sample - tidal marshes typically dominated by emergent vegetation, such as *Phragmites* and *Typha*. The type locality of *L. tenuipes* is the Altamaha River, 5 miles above the coastal town of Darien, Georgia, and some accounts give its range as extending only south, through Georgia and east Florida. But Hershler & Thompson gave the range of *L. tenuipes* as "New Jersey south to Campeche, Mexico," extending through the West Indies. And the US National Museum contains records as far north as Maine. In Virginia we have records from scattered freshwater marshes fringing the Chesapeake Bay.

Ecology & Life History. We are not aware of any study on the ecology of *Littoridinops*. Data regarding the range of salinity tolerated would be especially welcome. Our limited collections have generally been made from waters that were, to judge by their vegetation and their taste, entirely fresh. But *L. tenuipes* certainly does range into environments that are at least slightly and temporarily brackish, from which we have very few observations.

Conservation Status. NatureServe G5/SNR - Secure/Unranked.

