

FAUNA

Native Snails

Following the article in 'Western Wildlife' a native snail shell was found on the Australian Bush Heritage's block at Kojonup. Mal Graham, of CALM Kojonup, sent it to the Museum, and Dr Slack-Smith was very interested. She replied, in part:

"Prior to receiving your specimen we have had only a single shell of a *Bothriembryon* species from anywhere near Kojonup. It is a mystery as to why there should be so few records of specimens of this group of native snails from the huge area inland of the Escarpment and north of the Stirlings until one reaches the Goldfields-Esperance road. It is possible that it could be a paucity of collectors, but I don't think that is the only reason. The snails are really sparse.

"In addition, their shells are generally fragile, perhaps because of a low calcium content of the soil and so of the vegetation. As a result, the shells seem to disintegrate soon after the death of the snails, unlike those nearer to the coasts or in other calcium-rich localities. Species with well-calcified shells leave behind plenty of evidence of their existence, even when the populations aren't large.

"An interesting point is that wandoo woodlands seem to be more often inhabited by native snails of various groups than are surrounding jarrah or marri woodlands. Wandoo is often associated with outcrops of dolerite which, I understand, contains more calcium than does granite.

"I would be really keen to receive any information or, better still, any specimens of *Bothriembryon* species from the general area. If the specimens are alive then they could be packed into a dry container with air holes, such as a matchbox, and sent to me. I could have the live animal photographed, and could then narcotise and preserve it in such a way that it would be suitable for anatomical and genetics studies - should we ever have the good fortune to have a researcher willing and able to work on the group."

So how about it, *Land for Wildlifers* in the Great Southern? **Early this winter, have a Great Snail Hunt!** You never know, you might find a new species, and then it might be named after you! (Incidentally, the Kojonup species might be *Bothriembryon bradshawi*, originally found at Tambeilup.)