



Photo: Chong Chen



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Geographical range

Scaly-foot Snail

The Scaly-foot Snail (*Chrysomallon squamiferum*) is the first species endemic to deep-sea hydrothermal vents to have entered the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™.

It is the first animal to be listed as Endangered due to deep-sea mining. Some of the remarkable features allowing it to thrive in its extreme environment include the largest heart relative to its size in the animal kingdom, and an iron-infused armour.

This species is only known from three locations on deep-ocean ridges in the Indian Ocean, between 2,400 to 2,800 metres below sea level. Living in exceptionally hot active black smokers and diffuse flow sites, the Scaly-foot Snail has been found to occupy an area of less than 0.02 km². Due to its highly specific habitat, the maximum area it is estimated to potentially inhabit does not exceed 300 km².

There is ongoing investigation into the development of deep-sea mining in two of the three locations the Scaly-foot Snail has been found. There are rising concerns that if mining is permitted, the habitat could be severely reduced or destroyed.

While the conservation significance of this addition to the Red List has been widely reported in the media, there are no conservation actions currently in place at any of the vent fields in the Indian Ocean. Further research into the Scaly-foot Snail would be beneficial to improve understanding of the species, its threats and conservation.



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