

# National assessment done on potential invasive snail and slug pests in US

July 31 2009

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A collaborative team led by a University of Hawai'i at Manoa researcher has published the first-ever assessment of snail and slug species that are of potential threat to the nation's agriculture industry and the environment, should they ever be introduced in the U.S.

The July 2009 article in the *American Malacological Bulletin* is authored by snail/slug biologist Robert H. Cowie of the UH Manoa Center for Conservation Research and Training (CCRT) and his team. They evaluated all known snail and slug pests globally to determine which species would be of greatest concern if introduced nationally, in terms of their potential impacts on U.S. agriculture and the environment.

Cowie's collaborators are Robert. T. Dillon of the College of Charleston in South Carolina, and two U.S. Department of Agriculture invasive pest experts, David G. Robinson and James W. Smith.

The evaluation of snails and slugs from around the world was funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to UH Manoa and the American Malacological Society. The research is intended to be a tool for national [agriculture](#) inspection officials, in their efforts to keep such invasive pest species out of the country.

"The study is preliminary because of the serious lack of basic knowledge of many of these potentially [invasive species](#)," said Cowie, chair of the Ecology, Evolution and [Conservation Biology](#) graduate program at UH Manoa. "Nevertheless, it is an important first step. We hope it will not

only be invaluable information to protect the U.S., but also to serve as a stimulus to increase research efforts regarding these poorly understood animals."

Source: University of Hawaii at Manoa

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