

A CHECKLIST, ATLAS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR THE MARINE MOLLUSCA OF IRELAND

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The most recently published checklist for the marine Mollusca of Ireland was in 1900 by A.R. Nichols, former keeper of Natural History at the National Museums of Ireland. In 1992, a project was initiated to update and extend this checklist, and to compile an atlas of the species distribution. Fieldwork for other purposes had been carried out between 1974 and 1991, including Galway Bay (1974–76), north coast of Ireland (1986), Strangford Lough (1986–92), Mulroy Bay (1986–95), and Lough Hyne (1990–97).

The region under study is within 55° 30' N to 50° 30' N and 5° W to 16° W. Each recording 'square' is 6' × 12'. Of the 2303 'squares' for recording Mollusca in the area, 245 include the littoral zone. Since the inception of this project, a further thirteen major surveys have taken place around the coast of Ireland. There is a clear requirement for uniform coverage and recording effort to avoid the impression of relative rarity. 96% of the littoral recording 'squares' of Ireland have been surveyed, and a further 2% are inaccessible except *via* boat. Recording from the sublittoral zone is considerably less comprehensive, being dependent upon availability of diving and/or dredging facilities, and financial support.

Irish molluscan records have also been obtained from museum collections including the Ulster Museum, National Museum of Ireland, National Museum of Scotland and the National Museums & Galleries of Wales. Records from major surveys have also been incorporated (e.g. Northern Ireland Sublittoral and Littoral Surveys; BIOMAR survey (Republic of Ireland), BIOMÔR and SWISS surveys (southern Irish Sea)). Additional records have been supplied by government departments, agencies, universities, consultants, individuals and a comprehensive collection of literature.

Data have been incorporated into a computer database, which will generate the distribution maps. Currently there are 96,400+ records of Mollusca for the island of Ireland stored on the database representing 19,600+ visits to sites. Of these, 39,000+ records were obtained from 1700+ site visits by fieldwork specifically for this project. A bibliography of 1350+ references for marine Mollusca in Ireland has been compiled. From this dataset, a provisional checklist has been compiled of 889 taxa (live/dead, all dates), with an additional 54 species of uncertain status. Many records new to Ireland or to Sea Areas have been observed.

Publication of the atlas and checklist is in the form of a CD.

Title: The marine Mollusca of Ireland: checklist, atlas and bibliography

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Format: CD-ROM with accompanying instructions and notes as a sleeve.

Content: text & distribution map for each species; photographs of marine biotopes in Ireland; photographs for 200+ species; historical background; ecology & description of the coast/sublittoral where relevant to Mollusca etc.