

Blue-grey Taidropper

Endangered in Canada, Red-listed in B.C.

IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

Blue-grey Taidropper (*Prophysaon coeruleum*) is a small, rare slug that in Canada is known only from southern Vancouver Island. The intent of this guide is to help you identify this slug and distinguish it from superficially similar native and introduced slugs. By documenting and reporting observations, you can contribute to HAT's stewardship and conservation efforts.



Adult



Juvenile



Juvenile on mushroom

Size and body form:
Small & slender, adults 2 – 3 cm long



Colour: Blue-grey, ranging in hue from blue to pale grey; colour solid with no mottling or banding; compare with other taidroppers (see reverse)



Tail: Longitudinal parallel grooves & ridges (*white arrow*); faint constriction line (*black arrow*) at point where the tail will break off if seized by a predator; this line is present in all species of taidroppers.
Mantle: Covers almost $\frac{1}{2}$ of body.
Pneumostome: (breathing pore) slit-like on mantle edge towards front (*circle*)

Compare with Other, Potentially Confusing Species:

Size is expressed as total length of adults, when the slug is extended in movement.



Yellow-bordered Taildropper, *Prophysaon foliolatum*
5 – 10 cm; light mid-dorsal line on tail (*white arrow*); dark lateral line on each side of mantle, may be broken (*black arrow*); colour variable; yellow mantle edge (may be lacking in juveniles); yellow mucus

Note: Reticulate Taildropper (*P. andersonii*) is similar but smaller and without yellow mantle edge.



Worm Slug, *Boettgerilla pallens* (introduced)
3 – 6 cm; elongated, worm-like when in movement; keel (ridge) along the entire length of tail (*arrow*); light grey, may be bluish



Scarletback Taildropper, *Prophysaon vanattae*
2.5 – 4 cm; colour variable from grey, tan, black to orangy; dark lateral band on each side of mantle and tail (*arrows*); latter sometimes with a lighter band above



Grey Fieldslug, *Deroceras reticulatum* (introduced)
3.5 – 5 cm; cream, tan or grey, usually with dark mottling or flecks; pneumostome (breathing pore) near back of mantle (*circle*); partial keel (ridge) towards tail end (*arrow*); mucus milky white

Juveniles of *Arion* species (introduced)



Young juveniles of many species, such as *A. rufus* (Chocolate Arion), are small and grey, sometimes bluish; darker lateral bands usually but not always present; mantle granular and tail coarse-textured, lacking fine parallel grooves & a constriction line. When contracted, many Arions are bell-shaped.



Longneck Fieldslug, *Deroceras panormitanum* (introduced)
2.5 – 3 cm; translucent grey or brown, often with fine dark flecks; pneumostome near back of mantle & often light-coloured (*circle*); mucus clear

Production notes:

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Blue-grey Taildropper juvenile on mushroom: Lennart Sopuck photo; other photos & text by Kristiina Ovaska.

Web site: <http://www.hat.bc.ca/>



Hedgehog Arion, *Arion intermedius* (introduced)
1.5 – 2 cm; greyish with faint or no lateral bands; dark head & tentacles; underside yellowish; “prickly” appearance when contracted; mucus yellow