

# Chestnut Mystery Snail - *Pomacea bridgesii*

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By John Moyles

Mystery snails, *Pomacea bridgesii*, are members of the *Ampullariidae* family of which there are over 120 species. Unlike most snails, members of this family are not hermaphrodites and are either male or female. The genus *Pomacea* is known for its siphon that is used to breath air from the surface.



The shells and mantles of mystery snails can be quite variable in color. In the wild, both mantle and shell are brown. They are medium sized snails and can grow up to 1½ inches around. In the wild, these snails stay hidden during the day and come out to feed at night. In the aquarium, they are much more visible and, once adjusted, can be seen cruising around at all times.

Mystery snails are easy to care for as long as there is about an inch of space between the surface of the water and the aquarium lid. These snails need access to atmospheric air in order to breathe. They feed on algae and dead plant material as well as commercially available fish foods. They also should be fed fresh vegetables such as zucchini, lettuce and spinach. A cuttlebone should be made available to meet calcium needs.

Female mystery snails are larger than the males and lay their eggs above the water line on the aquarium glass. The eggs look rather like Styrofoam. The eggs hatch into smaller versions of the adults and require the same care.

The “chestnut” variety can be characterized by a pale mantle with a brown-striped yellow shell.