The body of a living *Streptostele musaecola* is red (Stanisic 1998). The shell is small (generally 4-7 mm in height) and elongate with strong radial ribs which are prominent on the seven whorls (Solem 1988). The shell aperture has quite a distinct curvature to the upper section of the expanded and thickened outer lip. There are no aperture “teeth” or barriers present. The shell when unoccupied or freshly empty is colourless but it may be come “chalky white” with age once empty.

Members of this family are common in Africa, South America and mainland Asia (Stanisic 1998). Over ninety genera and six hundred species are known and many are recorded as threatened on the IUCN Red List. *Streptostele musaecola* is native to western Africa but has been widely dispersed through human activity (Barker et al. 2005). The species is introduced to Fiji but to date known only from Viti Levu. Also reported to have been introduced to Australia (Robinson et al. 2009), American Samoa (Cowie 2001a & b), Vanuatu and French Polynesia (Solem 1988).

*Streptostele musaecola* has the same feeding method as the famous high risk carnivorous snail *Euglandina rosea*. Despite its small size *Streptostele musaecola* is a carnivorous predator capable of impacting on populations of small native snails.

In Fiji, *S. musaecola* is found in lowland disturbed forest (Barker et al. 2005). The species is generally found in litter and under stones and logs. In Malaysia members of this family are almost exclusively associated with limestone hills (Benthem Jutting 1954) but this is not the case elsewhere. In Tahiti recorded in gardens and secondary-growth scrub (Solem 1988).

**Habitat & Threats**

**Habitat**

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**Threats**

*S. musaecola* has the capacity to feed voraciously on small or young native snails. However, its impact on the native snail fauna of Fiji is to date undocumented.
Almost all members of the family Streptaxidae are carnivores that can feed on a variety of invertebrates including other snails (Stanisic 1998). Streptostele musaecola however is considered to be a molluscivorous species. That is, it is known to primarily feed on other molluscs (see Robinson et al. 2009). Although it is primarily a carnivorous predator, S. musaecola may also consume fungi and vegetable matter. The species is hermaphroditic (an individual may function as both male and female over their lifetime). According to Stanisic (1998) the eggs of members of the family Streptaxidae are comparatively large and few in number.

In shell shape and body colour Streptostele musaecola is most often mistaken for Gulella bicolor (Hutton). This latter species is less elongate than S. musaecola and has obvious “teeth” clearly visible in the shell aperture. The shell of S. musaecola is also similar in appearance to members of the family Subulinidae, some of which are also introduced to Fiji. All subulinids currently found in Fiji have small, elongate, pale shells that have no armature in the shell aperture. However, subulinids do not have a thickened aperture lip, as do S. musaecola and G. bicolor. S. musaecola is widely reported under the name Luntia insignis (E.A. Smith, 1898) (see Hausdorf et al. 2003) and also under the genus Tomostele (Solem 1988).


How to Cite: