

Freshwater snails of Britain and Ireland

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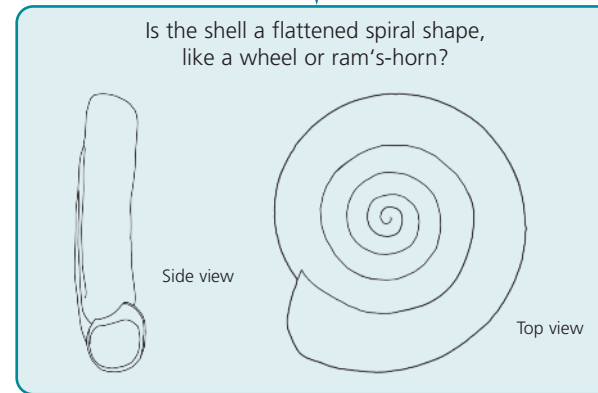


Key to freshwater snails



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Start here



Go to raised snail key (p. 5)

Yes

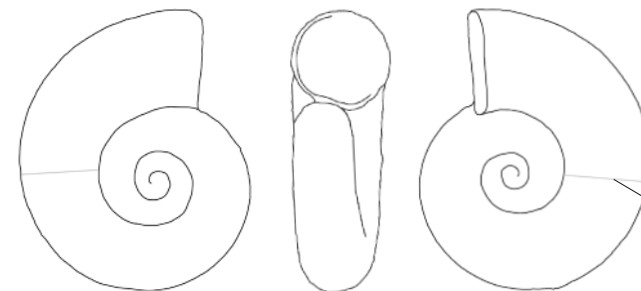
Is the aperture **clearly** circular in shape, and is there an operculum present (if visible)?

No

Go to flat snail key (p. 2)

Yes

Valvata cristata (Flat Valve Snail)



The only flat snail with an operculum, visible in the aperture or through the shell. This species has the aperture on the other side of the shell to the ram's-horn snails.

Operculum

Actual size

Key to flat snails (ram's-horns)

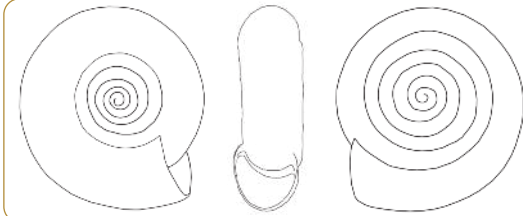
Start here

Is the aperture a distinct 'heart' or 'v' shape with an angled edge? Width less than 10 mm.

No

Yes

Bathyomphalus contortus (Twisted Ram's-horn)



Shell very tightly coiled. The bottom surface is deeply concave.



Does the shell have white ribs, visible inside the shell?

No

Yes

Hippeutis complanatus (Flat Ram's-horn)



Shell surface dull. The top and bottom sides of the shell are roughly equally convex. Common.



Segmentina nitida (Shining Ram's-horn)



Shell surface glossy. The bottom side of the shell is much more concave than the top. **Rare**, now mainly in ditches in S England.



Does the shell have five or more whorls which increase in size slowly?

No

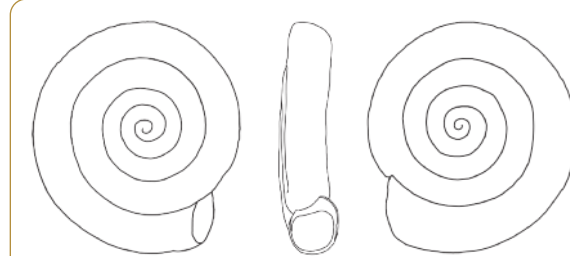
Yes

Are the whorls higher than broad, and is the aperture very narrow and crescent-shaped?

No

Yes

Anisus leucostoma (White-lipped Ram's-horn)



Aperture rounded. Common, typical of seasonal water bodies.

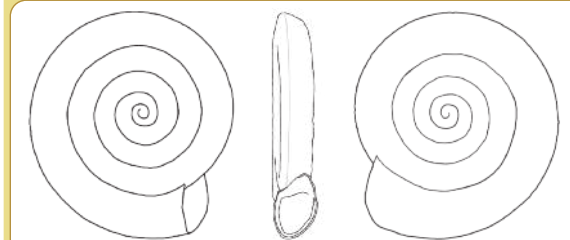


Is there a distinct keel around the outer edge of the shell?

No

Yes

Anisus vortex (Whirlpool Ram's-horn)

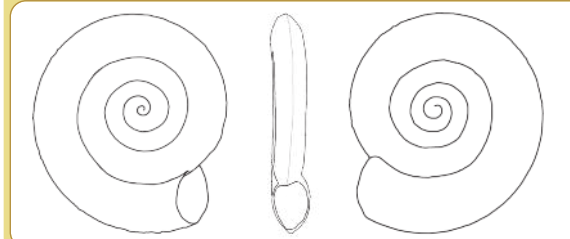


Sharp keel around the edge of the bottom surface, which is flat. Common.



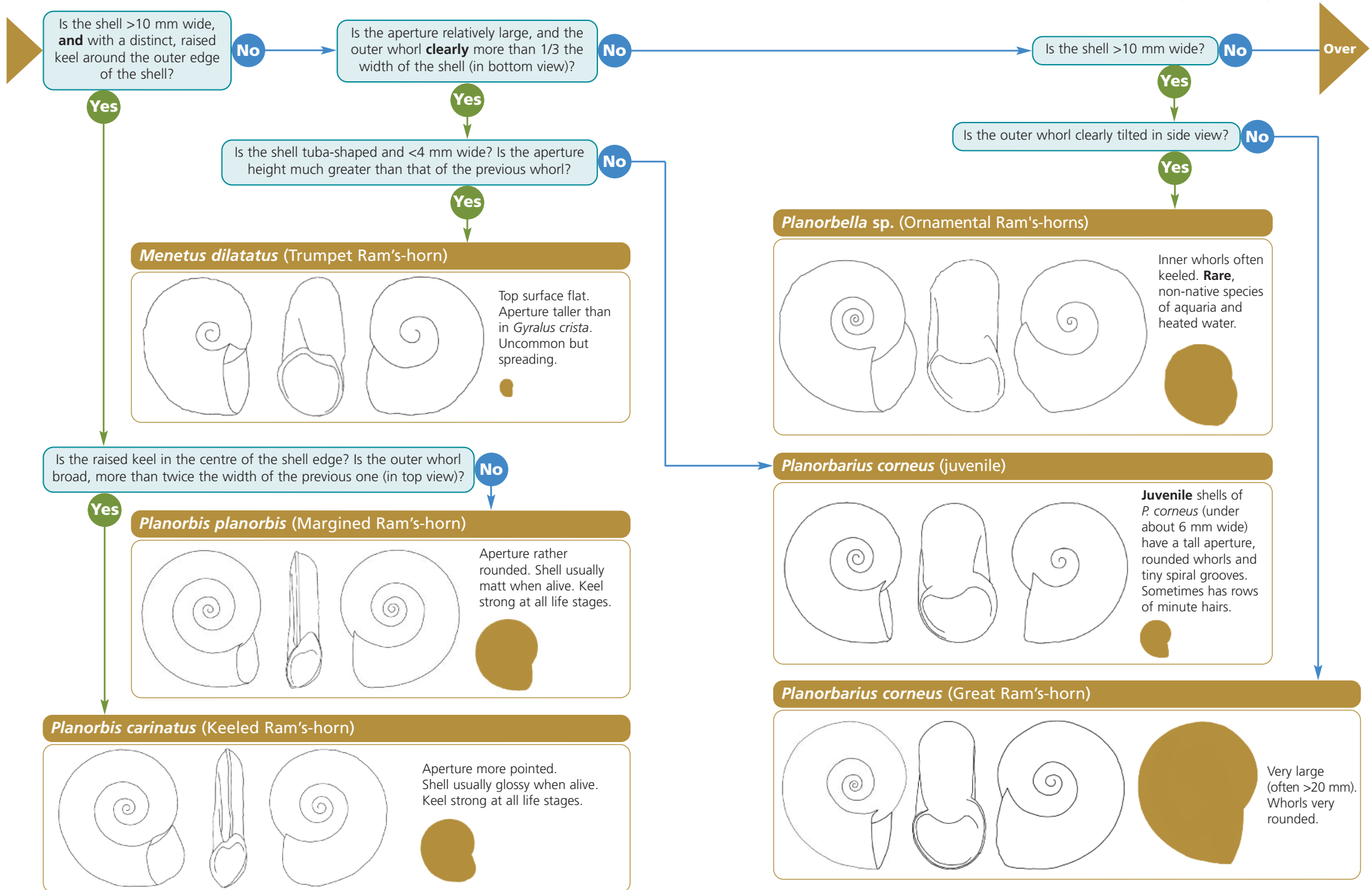
Or

Anisus vorticulus (Little Ram's-horn)



Blunt keel around the middle of the whorls. **Rare**, now found only in ditches in S England.





Is the shell >10 mm wide, and with a distinct, raised keel around the outer edge of the shell?

No

Is the aperture relatively large, and the outer whorl **clearly** more than 1/3 the width of the shell (in bottom view)?

No

Is the shell >10 mm wide?

No

Over

Yes

Yes

Is the shell tuba-shaped and <4 mm wide? Is the aperture height much greater than that of the previous whorl?

No

Is the outer whorl clearly tilted in side view?

No

Yes

Menetus dilatatus (Trumpet Ram's-horn)

Top surface flat. Aperture taller than in *Gyalus crista*. Uncommon but spreading.

Planorbella sp. (Ornamental Ram's-horns)

Inner whorls often keeled. **Rare**, non-native species of aquaria and heated water.

Is the raised keel in the centre of the shell edge? Is the outer whorl broad, more than twice the width of the previous one (in top view)?

No

Planorbarius corneus (juvenile)

Juvenile shells of *P. corneus* (under about 6 mm wide) have a tall aperture, rounded whorls and tiny spiral grooves. Sometimes has rows of minute hairs.

Yes

Planorbis planorbis (Margined Ram's-horn)

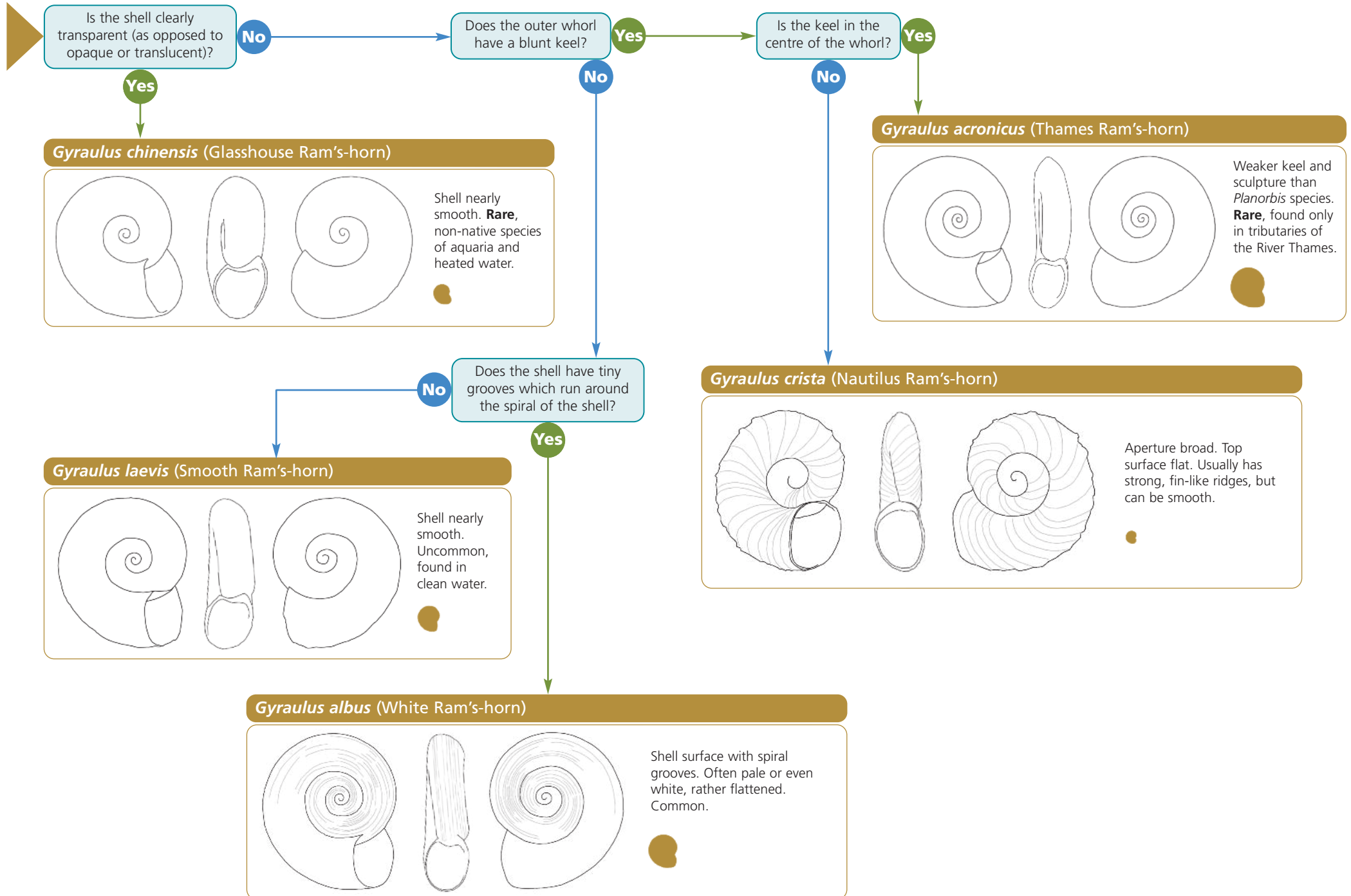
Aperture rather rounded. Shell usually matt when alive. Keel strong at all life stages.

Planorbarius corneus (Great Ram's-horn)

Very large (often >20 mm). Whorls very rounded.

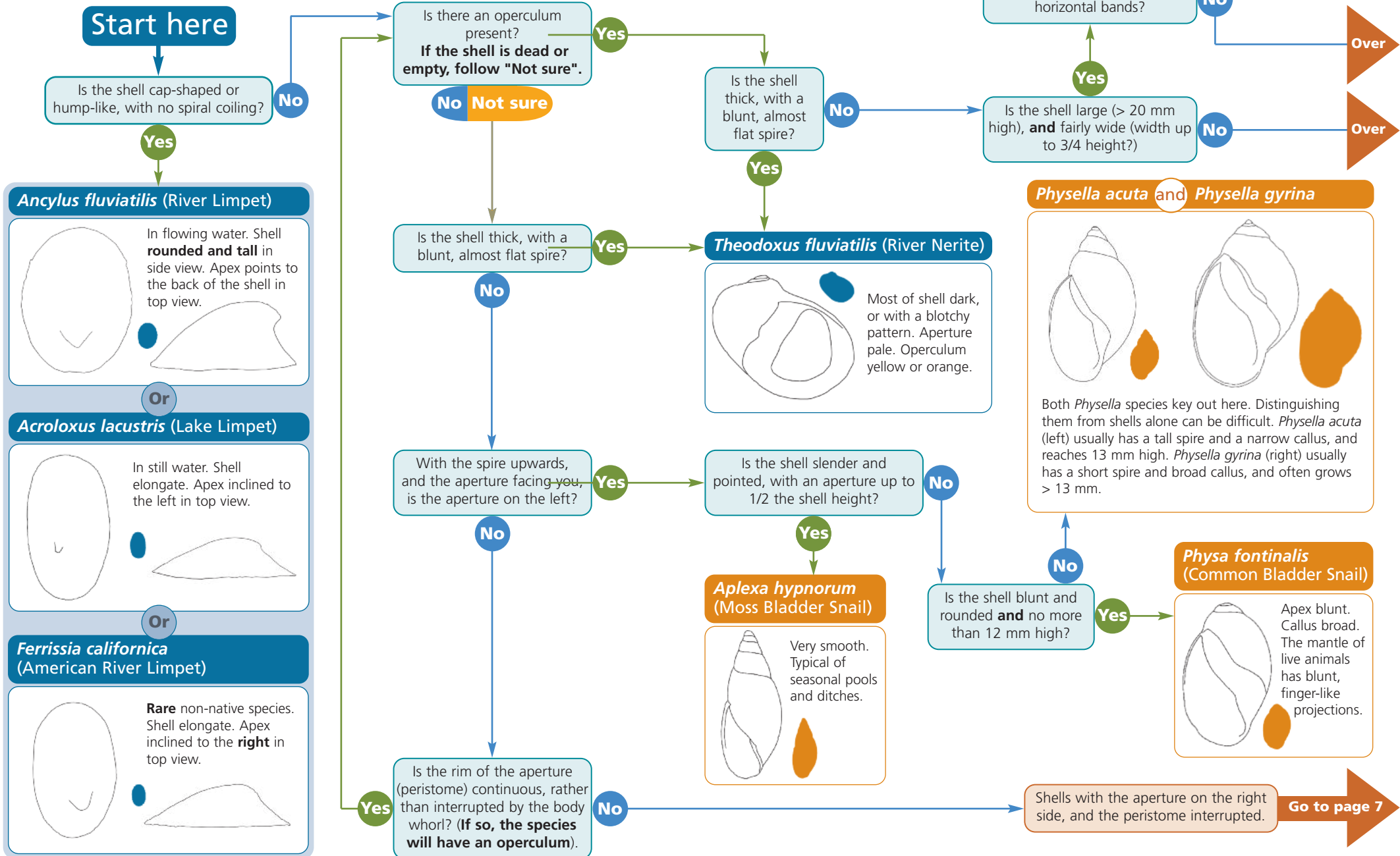
Planorbis carinatus (Keeled Ram's-horn)

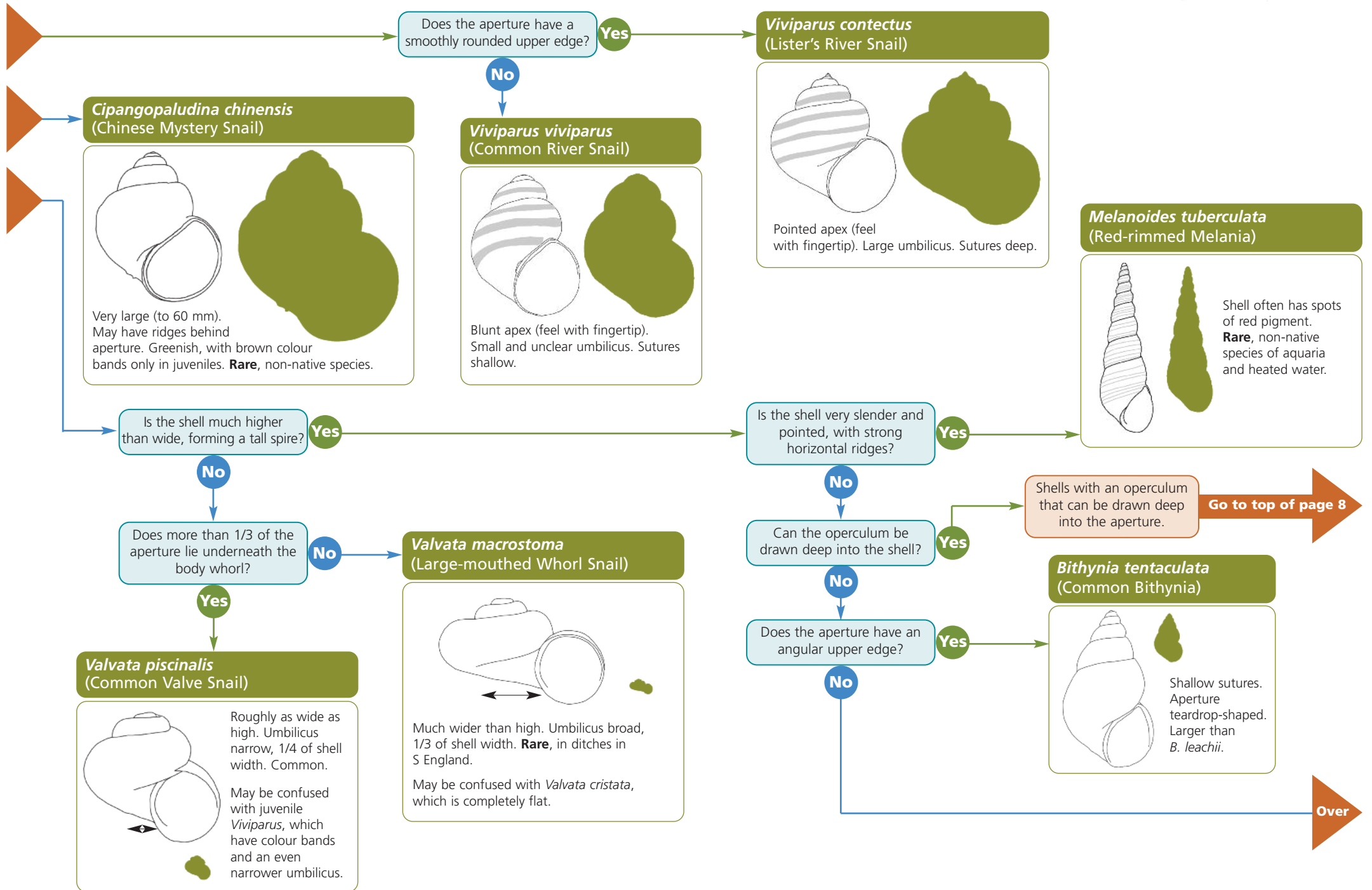
Aperture more pointed. Shell usually glossy when alive. Keel strong at all life stages.





Key to raised snails and limpets







***Myxas glutinosa* (Glutinous Snail)**

Shell partly covered by soft body (mantle) when alive. Callus broad, but very thin. **Rare**, now only in clean water in C Ireland and N Wales.

***Radix auricularia* (Ear Pond Snail)**

Spire short and pointed. Usually with a strong fold on columella. Lowland habitats.

***Radix rubiginosa* (Aquarium Pond Snail)**

Callus usually broad. **Rare**, non-native species of aquaria and heated water.

***Ampullacea bathica* (Wandering Pond Snail)**

Callus usually narrow. Aperture teardrop-shaped. Very variable - any uncertain "Radix" or "Myxas" specimens are likely to be this species. Common.

***Omphiscola glabra* (Slender Pond Snail)**

Evenly slender. **Rare** species of seasonal pools.

***Bithynia leachii* (Leach's Bithynia)**

Deep sutures. Aperture rounded. Smaller than *B. tentaculata*.

***Lymnaea stagnalis* (Great Pond Snail)**

Large (to 45 mm), aperture typically 1/2 shell height.

