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INITIAL OBSERVATIONS OF THE SUBFOSSIL OF PARTIALLY EXTINCT FAUNA FROM TINTAMARRE ISLAND (ANGUILLA BANK, LESSER ANTILLES)

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ABSTRACT

Although there is an increasing amount of subfossil data available that documents the effects of past human impact on the biodiversity of the West Indies, many islands remain poorly documented, if at all. The palaeontological study of an assemblage of terrestrial mollusk shells and bone remains recovered on the surface level of two cave deposits, *Trou de Souris* 1 and 4, provides the first data on the past biodiversity of Tintamarre Island (northern Lesser Antilles). The results indicate the presence of at least six vertebrate taxa and a possible six terrestrial snail species that are no longer present on the island. As it was not possible to excavate the deposits from which these assemblages were collected we currently lack a chronological framework to interpret the collected data. However, based on phenomena observed from several other islands in the Lesser Antilles, we propose several hypotheses linking the local extinction of these species to human activity on Tintamarre throughout the last few centuries.

Keywords: Antilles; extinction; island; palaeoontology; zooarchaeology.

RÉSUMÉ

PREMIÈRES OBSERVATIONS CONCERNANT LA FAUNE SUBFOSSILES ET

PARTIELLEMENT ÉTEINTE DE L'ÎLE DE TINTAMARRE (BANC D'ANGUILLA,

PETITES-ANTILLES)

Un nombre important d'études de restes vertébrés archéologiques et paléontologiques des

Petites Antilles documentent l'effet de l'impact humain ancien sur l'érosion de la biodiversité.

Pour autant, le registre fossile de nombreuses iles reste peu ou pas documenté. La présente

contribution apporte les premières données concernant la biodiversité animale terrestre passée

de l'îlet Tintamarre, dans le nord des Petites Antilles, sur la base de l'étude paléontologique

d'un ensemble de coquilles de mollusque terrestre et d'ossements recueillis en surface de

deux grottes : les Trou de Souris 1 et 4. Les résultats obtenus mettent en évidence la présence

passée et donc la disparition de l'îlet de 6 espèces de vertébrés ; ils suggèrent également la

disparition d'un nombre égal de taxons de mollusques terrestres. Des fouilles n'ayant pas été

menées, aucun cadre chronologique n'a pu être établi pour situer ces disparitions dans le

temps. Toutefois, sur la base des connaissances établies sur les autres îles des Petites Antilles,

plusieurs hypothèses mettant ces disparitions en relation avec les activités humaines menées

sur l'îlet au cours des derniers siècles sont proposées.

Mots-clés: Antilles; archéozoologie; extinction; île; paléontologie.

1 1 - Introduction

The increasing volume of subfossil material recovered from across the globe provides 2 substantial evidence that human activities have acted as the major driver of faunal 3 biodiversity erosion across the Holocene (Ceballos et al., 2015; Ceballos et al., 2017). It is 4 now clear that human activity has led to dramatic changes in the environment and ultimately 5 6 to species extinction, and that this impact has been greater and faster than that of natural 7 events. Among all geographic areas, islands are those that are the most impacted by humans, and island fauna often suffers from intense alteration following the initial colonization and 8 9 subsequent anthropization of their primary environment (Olson & James, 1982; Steadman, 1995; Alcover et al., 1998). The Lesser Antillean islands are a good model of the 10 impact of past human colonization on insular environments, including important evidence of a 11 massive extinction event of vertebrate species following the rapid implementation of modern 12 agricultural practices during the colonial period (Steadman et al., 1984; Bochaton, 2016; 13 14 Boudadi-Maligne et al., 2016). These islands also demonstrate the predominance of humaninduced extinction over those related to the natural changes in climate since the end of the 15 Pleistocene (Bailon et al., 2015; Stoetzel et al., 2016). However, despite the continual 16 increase in the knowledge of the Holocene biodiversity of Caribbean islands, information 17 remains localized, concentrated on some islands while other remain poorly investigated. The 18 result is that it is presently difficult to have an accurate understanding of the general processes 19 20 impacting this region because only a few direct comparisons between islands can be drawn. For instance, in the Lesser Antillean insular chain that includes the southern part of the West 21 22 Indies, Guadeloupe (Bochaton et al., 2015; Boudadi-Maligne et al., 2016; Stoetzel et al., 2016; Bochaton et al., 2016), Barbuda (Etheridge, 1964; Watters et al., 1984; Pregill et 23 al., 1994), Antigua (Steadman et al., 1984; Pregill et al., 1988) and Anguilla (Cope, 1883; 24 25 Pregill et al., 1994; Roughgarden, 1995; Kemp & Hadly, 2016), the islands have been the

object of many palaeontological studies, whereas the past biodiversity of most other islands still remain unknown. The Anguilla bank (fig. 1-A) is an unusual case, as one of its main islands (Anguilla) has been heavily studied, whereas the past biodiversity of the Saint Martin (St. Martin) and Saint Bartholomew (St. Barth) islands remain poorly understood. In St. Martin this is due to the intense destruction of its palaeontological and archaeological cave deposits over the two last centuries. The caves of St Martin and their sedimentary infillings have been mostly destroyed, first from phosphate exploitation, and later from real estate development (Auffenberg, 1958; Hummelinck, 1981; McFarlane & MacPhee, 1993). The fact that most limestone caves are near the coast make them especially susceptible to destruction from development related to coastal mass tourism installations and private residences (Genoways et al., 2007). The effect is that very little palaeontological data has been collected on St. Martin Island and only two sites are known to contain bones preserved in their sedimentary infilling: the caves of Devil's Hole and of Cuckoo Hole near Pelikankey (Cope, 1883; Auffenberg, 1958). However, the recovered palaeontological material was mostly composed of remains of the now-extinct giant hutia, Amblyrhiza inundata Cope, 1868 with nearly no remains of other vertebrate taxa present (Cope, 1883). Nevertheless, some open-air archaeological sites do exist on St. Martin (Bonnissent, 2008) containing vast quantities of fossil remains: Hope Estate (Grouard, 2004; Newsom & Wing, 2004), Anse des Pères (Hofman & Hoogland, 1999; Nokkert, 1999), Norman Estate (Hofman & Hoogland, 1999; Nokkert, 1999), and Baie aux Prunes (Grouard, 2005; Bonnissent, 2008). Still, despite having been the object of some zooarchaeological study, these sites were never exhaustively studied from a palaeontological point of view and provide limited information on the past biodiversity of the island. These substantial limitations in our knowledge of the biodiversity of St. Martin also apply to its nearest island neighbor; the Island of Tintamarre less than 3km away from the northeast coast of St. Martin (fig. 1-B).

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Tintamarre is a small island of 0.8 km² entirely composed of limestone (Dugain et al., 1989). This island is part of the Anguilla bank, mainly composed of the islands of St. Martin, Saint-Barthelemy, and Anguilla that are currently separated by areas of sea less than 30m deep, and during the Late Pleistocene formed a single island (Christman, 1953). Tintamarre is nearly flat with a maximum elevation of 30m and is particularly dry due to a combination of low precipitation and a porous limestone substrate. The vegetation of Tintamarre includes the remnant of a dry deciduous forest with numerous xerophytes and succulent plant species, part of a semi-deciduous forest on the plateau with lignum vitae (Gaiacum officinale) and water mampoo (Pisonia subcordata), and finally salt-tolerant trees like manchineel (Hippomane mancinella) and seagrape (Coccoloba uvifera) near the lagoons and beaches (Impact Mer, 2020). Nothing is currently known about the past biodiversity of Tintamarre but its modern faunal diversity is extremely poor. Tintamarre is currently occupied only by around 33 vertebrate species, and with no more than seven species of terrestrial mollusks discovered by the collecting missions carried out in the second part of the twentieth century (Hovestadt & Neckheim, 2020). Initially only four taxa in the families Gastocoptidae and Pupillidae were known from the material collected in 1949 by A. Hummelinck (Hummelinck, 1981) and published by Haas (1960), before three new taxa were added after the recent review of the collections made in the 1970s by Hummelinck (Hovestadt & Neckheim, 2020). Mammals are currently represented by at least three species: goats (Capra hircus), black rats (Rattus rattus), and house mice (Mus musculus) (Brown, 2008, pers. obs.). Brown rats (Rattus norvegicus) may have once been present but recent trapping campaigns have demonstrated they are not currently found on Tintamarre (Lorvelec et al., 2013; Lorvelec et al., 2017). Mongooses and cats are absent from the Island. In respect to reptiles, the Tintamarre islet is currently occupied by five species of lizards: the Anguilla Bank ameiva (Pholidoscelis plei), the Anguilla Bank tree anole (Anolis gingivinus), the Anguilla Bank skink (Spondylurus powelli), the

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Sphaerodactyle of St. Martin (Sphaerodactylus parvus), and the green iguana (Iguana iguana) 76 77 (Powell & Henderson, 2012; Lorvelec et al., 2017). A single tortoise species is also present, the red-footed tortoise (Chelonoidis carbonaria) (Powell & Henderson, 2012). The island is 78 79 currently home to a total of 24 different bird species. Tintamarre hosts several species of marine birds and is classified as an Important Bird Area for breeding populations of Red-80 billed Tropicbird (Phaethon aethereus), Brown Noddy (Anous stolidus), Audubon's 81 Shearwater (Puffinus Iherminieri) and a few other seabirds (Collier and Brown, 2008, 82 83 Leblond, 2012). It also hosts a small number of terrestrial bird species including doves (Zenaida aurita), passeriforms (e. g. Elaenia martinica, Tyrannus dominicensis, Coereba 84 85 flaveola, Loxigilla noctis, and Grassquit (Melanospiza bicolor) (Leblond, 2003; eBird, 2020). 86 No amphibians are currently present on the island. The low levels of biodiversity on Tintamarre are contrasted by those of the nearby St. Martin 87 Island (Genoways et al., 2007; Yokoyama, 2013; De Massary et al., 2017). This difference 88 may be due to the species-area relationship (e.g. Ricklefs and Lovette, 1999), but may also be 89 a result of human impact, including intensive environmental modification. The latter 90 hypothesis matches the historical data of the past use of Tintamarre Island, which despite 91 being currently uninhabited has been subject to occupation and exploitation. The first 92 evidence of occupation dates back to the beginning of the 18th century for the production of 93 lime, as well as a high likelihood of forest exploitation for fuel (Lafleur, 1990). Between 1902 94 and 1931 following the installment of Diederik Christian as the "King of Tintamarre", the 95 small island hosted around 150 people and was subject to an intense level of agricultural 96 97 activity in comparison to its size (Hartog, 1981). At that time the island was home to about 60-70 cattle and 540 sheep, in addition to cotton being cultivated (Hartog, 1981). In 1931 the 98

island was sold to Louis Fleming, whose family still owns the inner part of the island. The

island was first rented to be used as an airport by the "Compagnie Aérienne Antillaise" until

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1947 (Casius, 2005). At that time the island was only occupied by some employees of the company, and is since free of all permanent human occupation although tourists still frequent the beach. There is also some sparse evidence of an occupation of the island during the pre-Columbian era, but this needs to be described with greater precision (Hénocq, 2019). The impact of each different phases of occupation has remained until now completely unknown, as there was no data available on any subfossil material from Tintamarre. The present study begins to start filling this gap in knowledge by providing the first data on the past biodiversity of Tintamarre Island based on the study of subfossil remains collected from two fossil-bearing cave deposits on the island.

2 - MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to survey the caves of St Martin, members of our team visited Tintamarre Island in March 2016 and described several caves that included two sites identified as being of palaeontological interest: the caves of *Trou de Souris* 1 and *Trou de Souris* 4 (Lenoble *et al.*, 2017). During this first visit samples of bone remains were collected from the floor of each of these two cavities. The preliminary study of these samples revealed they were likely to be quite ancient as well as containing several species that are no longer present on Tintamarre. It was therefore of interest to conduct excavations in order to investigate the composition of the past biodiversity of Tintamarre within a stratigraphic and chronological framework. However, because of administration related to the ownership of the island it has been impossible to obtain an excavation permit. We visited the island again in 2019 to collect further surface samples at the two sites and decided to publish the study of these assemblages pending future excavations. The material we describe here is thus probably a minor fraction of the full palaeontological content of these sites but it still provides some interesting preliminary data on the past biodiversity of Tintamarre.

The site of the *Trou de Souris 1* (18°07'22.26"N, 62°58' 31.368"O) (TS1) is the first of a group of five caves located on Tintamarre in the east part of the Island, near the Mice Hole locality (fig. 1-C). This small cave is the lateral chamber of a banana hole that lies between one and two meters below the topographic surface; the chamber is a dozen meters long, and two to three meters wide (fig. 1-D). Its floor is composed of loose clay sediment covered by many vertebrate bones. The bedrock of the cavity is not visible which suggests the existence of a sedimentary infilling of unknown depth. The site of the Trou de Souris 4 Cave (18°07'22.728"'N, 62°58' 31.62"'O) (TS4) is located nearby TS1 (fig. 1-C). The cave is at a depth of six to seven meters and is accessible through a narrow shaft. It is six to seven meters long and four meters wide (fig. 1-E). The cave floor is similar to that of *Trou de Souris 1*, including the scattered small vertebrate bones on the surface. These two caves are currently unoccupied by bats as evidenced by the absence of decaying organic remains on the floor, and overall seem to present all the suitable characteristics for the preservation of subfossil assemblages. At both sites the bone and shell samples were collected by hand from the floor and no sieving was conducted. The collected remains were not sampled for isotopic [radiometric] dating as their probable historic/colonial origins (see Discussion) would render 14C dating impossible. Additional snail shells were hand-collected from the crevices in the limestone pavement on the rock surface near Trou de Souris 1 (SXM-009: 18°07'22.26"'N, 62°58' 31.368"O) and in several other outdoor localities: near the northeastern point of the island (SXM-012: 18°07'22.296''N, 62°58'27.047''O), above the northern cliffs (where a soil sample was also taken and sorted under the microscope) (SXM-013: 18°07'25.536"N, 62°58' 37.92''O; SXM-014: 18°07'22.44''N, 62°58' 47.459''O), close to the old sheepfold (SXM-015: 18°07'04.476''N, 62°59'03.227''O), and from Baie Blanche beach (SXM-016: 18°07'0.48"N, 62°59' 14.892"O).

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Bone and terrestrial snail shell remains recovered in Tintamarre and from the *Trou de Souris* caves were identified using the West Indian landsnail shell and osteological collections of the PACEA laboratory (Bordeaux University, France), the comparative anatomy collection of the *Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle* (Paris, France) and appropriate published identification criteria cited throughout the text. Vertebrate bone remains were quantified; terrestrial snail shells were recorded as only presence/absence for each locality.

3 - RESULTS

- During the two surveys of Tintamarre and the sites of *Trou de Souris* 1 and 4, 519 vertebrate bone remains and many fragmented or complete shells of terrestrial snails were recovered (Tabs. 1 & 2).
- 159 3.1 VERTEBRATE BONE REMAINS (TAB. 1)

Most of the mammal bones collected at both sites were attributed to unidentified rodents (N=76) but we still were able to identify some cranial, mandibular, and dental remains with more precision. Among these remains is a nearly complete right mandible (fig. 2-B) identified as *Rattus rattus* (Linnaeus, 1758). Some rodent post-cranial remains were also identified as *Mus musculus* (Linnaeus, 1758) on the basis of their very small size. This is further confirmed by the presence of a mandible bearing two embedded molars (m1 and m2). In addition to these two fairly common rodents, four dental remains were attributed to an endemic Lesser Antillean rodent, *Pennatomys nivalis* Turvey, Weksler, Morris, and Nokkert, 2010 (fig. 2-C, D, E), from the criteria described by Turvey et al. (2010). The two M1 (complete with little wear) may be identified by: the presence of three alveolar roots, the absence of or a much reduced accessory root, an undivided anterocone (anteromedian flexus absent see fig. 2-D), a well-developed mesoloph (see fig. 2-C), and a very small posteroflexus (notch at posterior margin of metacone see fig. 2-D). In addition, the position of the posterior border of the

zygomatic arch is slightly anterior to the most anterior alveolus of the M1. The M2 was broken but its three roots were visible and the mesoflexus comprised a single internal fossette (see fig. 2-E). The final rodent remain of interest was a mandible bearing a much worn M1 with two large roots and two accessory roots. The material was too poorly preserved to take precise measurements of the dental rows, however, the complete mandibular and maxillary rows probably would not have exceeded 7mm in length. This would be close in size to *Pennatomys nivalis* (respectively 6.61 and 6.12mm; Turvey et al., 2010) and quite unlike the other forms of native rodents present in the north of the Lesser Antilles, namely *Antillomys rayi* (> 9mm; Brace et al., 2015; Goedert et al., 2020).

Among the other mammal taxa, 28 remains were identified as *Oryctolagus cuniculus* (Linnaeus, 1758) including a complete mandible (fig. 2-A). Some remains of Caprinae (phalanx and petrosal bones) were also identified but no diagnostic elements were present that would have allowed a specific identification as either *Capra* or *Ovis*. An unidentified Phyllostomid bat was represented by a single clavicle, and a cat canine (*Felis catus*; (Linnaeus, 1758)) and a probable lower incisor of Agouti (*Dasyprocta leporina*; Linnaeus, 1758) was also present.

Squamates were represented by four taxa; at least one snake and three lizards. The snake remains comprise an assemblage of 109 colubrid snake vertebrae (fig. 2-F) plus a few cranial remains. The morphology of the identified trunk vertebrae are similar to those of *Alsophis rijgersmaei* Cope, 1869 (see Bochaton et al., 2019a) but the diverse morphological variability observed in the assemblage precludes a definitive identification and limits attribution to the level of the genus *Alsophis*. Vertebrae with morphological criteria of the genus *Erythrolamprus* (see Bochaton et al., 2019a) are however absent from the assemblage. It is possible that the morphological variability of the fossil vertebrae of Tintamarre may correspond to several species, as has been proposed for assemblages in Guadeloupe

(Bochaton et al., 2019, a) but further study of the Antillean colubrid snakes vertebral morphology should be carried out to better understand the intraspecific and ontogenetic variability. Lizard remains are mostly identified as anoles (N=90), the remains primarily comprising dentaries of a size similar to the St Martin anole currently present on Tintamarre, Anolis gingivinus Cope, 1864. These bones bear a series of pleurodont teeth slightly labialolingually flattened with tricuspid posterior teeth and monocuspid anterior teeth. Ground lizards of the genus *Pholidoscelis* Fitzinger, 1843 are represented by 17 cranial remains including several dentaries (fig. 2-H). The Meckel groove is fully open on these bones, and the dental region is slightly arched and bears a heterodont dentition with teeth increasing posteriorly in size (Bochaton et al., 2019, b). A sample of 62 gecko bones were identified to the genus *Thecadactylus* Goldfuss, 1820. The dentaries of this gecko (fig. 2-G) are recognized by their homodont dentition composed of a high number (30-50) of monocuspid, slender, slightly blunt teeth; a ratio inferior to 4 between the dental length (in mm) and the number of teeth; and the extension of the lateral coronoid facet that reaches the level of the last dental position (Bochaton et al., 2018). The gecko represented by these remains is now absent from Tintamarre. Four fragments of tortoise shell (costal and neural plates) have been identified but do not bear any distinctive criteria. We propose a tentative attribution to Chelonoidis carbonaria (Spix, 1824) as this tortoise is still present on the island. A single remain (a tibiofibula) of a small amphibian whose size and overall morphology is similar to members of the genus Eleutherodactylus Duméril and Bibron, 1841 was also identified. Nine bird remains representing two species of Columbidae (Columbina passerina (Linnaeus, 1758), Zenaida cf. aurita (Temminck, 1809), and the passeriform Margarops fuscatus (Vieillot, 1808) have been collected across the two sites (Tab. 1). These bones were identified from their morphological similarity to modern specimens. Zenaida cf. aurita is represented by

a single fragment of ulna and was identified from the morphology of the condylus dorsalis

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ulnae (sensu Baumel and Witmer, 1993) which matches that of modern Zenaida aurita. The latter species is the only Zenaida species to have been observed within the last few years on Tintamarre (eBird, 2020).

3.2 - TERRESTRIAL SNAIL SHELLS (TAB. 2)

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Twelve morphotypes corresponding to at least eleven species of terrestrial snail have been identified from all samples collected in both the caves and outdoor localities. Among these eleven species, seven were found in the Trou de Souris caves, and three were found exclusively in the cave contexts (Tab. 2). Annulariidae shells were collected at the majority of collection points but were only represented by old or fossil (fully mineralized) specimens. Two species are represented; most specimens are of a medium to small-size, ranging from an elongate conic shape (fig. 3-A) to a short conic shape (fig. 3-B), both displaying equally developed spiral rounded cords and axial erected lamellae fusing to form tufts in the sutures of the whorls. These features agree with identification as Diplopoma crenulatum (Potiez & Michaud, 1835) (see also criteria in Watters, 2014), the elongate morph being similar to the specimen from St. Martin illustrated by Watters (op. cit. fig. 100). The short conic morph is characterized by a smaller length, lower number of whorls (up to 4 ½), more prominent spiral cords, and very developed sutural tufts that are frequently broken off. All these characteristics make this morph similar to the Diplopoma sulculosum species (Pfeiffer, 1852) known from the neighboring island of Anguilla, although D. sulculosum has more pronounced features (see criteria in Watters, 2014). This short morph is also indistinguishable from the St. Barth specimens assigned to D. crenulatum by Questel (2017) and D. sulculosum by Hovestadt and Neckheim (2020). This morph and Tintamarre's general population of *D. crenulatum* therefore present characteristics

that are intermediary between D. crenulatum and D. sulculosum, which raises taxonomic

questions beyond the scope of this paper. We therefore cautiously classify it here as a *D. crenulatum* subspecies. The second species of Annulariidae is represented by a few specimens collected only in *Trou de Souris* 1 and 4. These are medium-sized specimens characterized by a teardrop-shaped aperture, a dominant axial sculpture of numerous and close lamellae and minute sutural tufts formed by 1-2 expanded axial lamellae (fig. 3-C), all characters referring to the species *Chondropoma pupiforme* (Sowerby, 1843) following Watters (2014).

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A perforated Sagdidae shell displaying depressed helicoids, a subcircular aperture, rounded whorls, and a very fine axial striation (Shuttleworth, 1854) (fig. 3-D) is identified as Hyalosagda subaquilla (Shuttleworth, 1854). This species was collected both in the caves and the outdoor locations and is represented by a small number of old shells. A unique fragmented shell of Oleacinidae is identified as Melaniella gracillima (L. Pfeiffer, 1839) (fig. 3-E), based on its slender form and flattened whorls, its sub-triangular aperture displaying a right margin impressed outward, and some twenty axial cords on the last whorl (Pilsbry, 1907). The number of intercalated striae (a dozen) permits further identification to the variety M. g. sanctithomensis (Pilsbry, 1907) that is present in the northern Lesser Antilles (Pilsbry, 1907; Haas, 1962). Two old shells of a small Bulimulidae were found in Trou de Souris 4 and at one outdoor locality. The occurrence of well-marked irregular axial ribs, a shiny surface and almost straight sides unambiguously enable identification to the species Bulimulus lehmani (Fischer, 1857) (fig. 3-F) known from Anguilla and Dog Island (Breure, 1974). Associated with these specimens were fragments of a very large and thin Bullimulidae shell. Because of the fragmented nature of this material we were unable to identify it to a given genera or species. Among the most frequently encountered shells are those identified as Gastropotidae. This taxon was recovered in larger quantities at the localities where the litter was sampled, which facilitated the recovery of the very small shells of these snails. Three species were identified in the recovered samples, the most abundant being Gastrocopta bardadensis

(Pfeiffer, 1852) (fig. 3-G). The shells of this species were found associated with larger shells (Length ≈ 2.5 mm) with a non-bifid parietal tooth that were identified as *Gastrocopta servilis* (Gould, 1843). Smaller shells (length < 2 mm) were also found in the same contexts, with a poorly developed bifid angulo-parietal tooth and lacking any infraparietal nodule, both characteristics present in the species *Gastrocopta pellucida* (Pfeiffer, 1840) (see Characters in Pilsbry, 1916-1918). *Pseudopineria viequensis* (Pfeiffer, 1856) is represented by both old and recent shells (fig. 3-H) in the samples collected from both caves and outdoors locations. This species is characterized by its relative moderate size (Length ≈ 5 mm), its conical oval imperforate shape and the strong oblique striations that give a spiny shape to its keel (Pilsbry, 1904). The shells collected on Tintamarre resemble the elongated variety of *Pseudopineria viequensis* that is common in the northern Lesser Antilles (Pilsbry, 1904). A single old shell of a large pupoid, *Pupoides albilabris* (Adams, 1841) characterized by its reflected peristome (fig. 3-I) (Pilsbry, 1948) was found in the cave of *Trou de Souris* 4.

4 - DISCUSSION

The faunal assemblages recovered from the caves of *Trou de Souris* 1 and 4 provide evidence of the past occurrence of at least six vertebrate taxa that are no longer present on Tintamarre Island. The timing of the extinction of these taxa is difficult to establish as the studied remains were recovered on the surface and are not dated. However, the faunal composition of the subfossil assemblage, rich in non-native species introduced by Europeans, suggests at least that these assemblages mostly document relatively recent time periods, maybe the few last centuries.

The vertebrate assemblages of *Trou de Souris* 1 and 4 are mostly composed of rodent remains the majority of which (black rat and house mouse) are taxa that arrived in the Caribbean during the colonial period along with other taxa such as goats. These taxa are still present

nowadays on Tintamarre and the fossils assemblages do not provide further clues about the specific date of their introduction on the island. More interesting is the case of two other European mammals that are present in the *Trou de Souris* bone assemblage but nowadays are absent on Tintamarre: the rabbit and the cat. Both of these taxa were introduced to the Lesser Antilles as early as the 17th century and were likely present on Tintamarre during the first third of the 20th century when the island was intensively cultivated. The occurrence of cats near human settlements is the likely association of this species, and a journal article published in the "Journal de Paris" the 23rd of August 1913 describing the daily life of the "King of Tintamarre" mentions that he was hunting wild rabbits on the island. The disappearance of the rabbit on Tintamarre could be easily explained by the absence of agricultural activities on Tintamarre after the island was sold in 1931 and by the presence of rats on the Island. In general rabbits tend to fail to establish feral populations in the West Indies because juveniles are intensively predated by mongooses and rats (Du Tertre, 1654; Flux & Fullagar, 1992; Lorvelec et al., 2007). Also, from a more global point of view, rabbits are difficult to breed in tropical areas (Lebas, 2005). The disappearance of cats is more difficult to explain as Muridae (mice and rats) are still present on the island and would represent an important food source; but there is no evidence that any population of feral cats ever existed on Tintamarre and this species may have left the island at the same time as the last farmers. The final mammal of probable introduced origin present in these fossil assemblages is the agouti. These rodents are known to have been introduced by Amerindian populations to the Lesser Antilles (Newsom & Wing, 2004; Giovas et al., 2016) and have not been previously mentioned in reports on Tintamarre. The arrival date of this species on Tintamarre remains very enigmatic as well as the reason for its local extinction. It might have been predated by humans and dogs but more data would be needed to discuss this question further.

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There are two wild mammals present in the assemblages of *Trou de Souris* 1 and 4 that are now absent on Tintamarre (*Pennatomys nivalis* and Phyllostomidae sp.) along with one snake (Alsophis sp.), one lizard (Thecadactylus sp.), and one amphibian (Eleutherodactylus sp.). The occurrence of *Pennatomys nivalis* on Tintamarre is worth noting as it is the first identification of this taxon outside of the St. Kitts bank (Turvey et al., 2010; Brace et al., 2015). One of us (D. C.) also identified this taxon in the archaeological assemblage of Hope Estate in St. Martin, which would possibly extend the distribution of this taxon to the whole Anguilla bank. This taxon may also have been introduced from the nearby St. Kitts bank but its native or introduced status on Tintamarre and the whole Anguilla bank cannot be tested with the currently available data. Lesser Antillean rice rats (Antillomys rayi et Megalomys ssp.) all became extinct after the European arrival, between the XVIth and the XXth century probably following the destruction of their native environments and the introduction of predators, and competitors such as the black rat (Harris, 2009; Goedert et al., 2020). The presence of several introduced taxa and intensive agricultural activities on Tintamarre across the last few centuries could also potentially have led to the extinction of Pennatomys nivalis on the island, an explanation also viable for the four other now-extirpated taxa discovered in the Trou de Souris bone collections. There is no available record regarding the modern diversity of bats on Tintamarre but we did not observe any during our exploration of the caves of the island and it is possible that phyllostomid bats are no longer present. The three species of birds identified in the *Trou de Souris* sites are relatively common birds on the neighboring island of St. Martin. The Pearly-eyed Thrasher (Margarops fuscatus) and the Common Ground Dove (Columbina passerina) have not been observed on the islet for the last decade. They are however listed as present on the island by older studies (Collier & Brown, 2008). These birds could be either occasional occupants of the Island, or have disappeared relatively recently. In respect to reptiles and amphibians, the extirpation of

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Alsophis on Tintamarre is not surprising as these snakes are known to be very vulnerable to human impact and have suffered many local extinctions in the Lesser Antilles including on the nearby island of St. Martin where the native species of these snakes is supposed to have become extinct very recently (Breuil, 2002; Powell & Henderson, 2012). The extirpation of Thecadactylus is more unusual as this taxon generally resists human disturbance quite well, and there is no clear explanation for its disappearance on Tintamarre. This gecko genus is represented by an endemic species on the Anguilla bank, Thecadactylus oskrobapreinorum Köhler & Vesely, 2011 and so is likely to have been present for a long time in the bank and also on Tintamarre. There is no evidence for a similarly endemic species frog of the genus Eleutherodactylus on the Anguilla banc. Such a species may have become extinct and replaced by two other lesser Antillean species: E. martinicensis (Tschudi, 1838) and E. johnstonei Barbour, 1914. As it is not possible to identify the two frog remains found in the Trou de Souris caves we cannot state if they belong to an introduced species or a native one. The extinction of this unidentified amphibian is however surprising and could be potentially explained by aridification following the removal of the primary forest for agricultural purpose, or by the final abandonment of the agricultural activity of the island. The other non-mammal taxa represented by bone remains collected in the fossil deposits are still present on the island today. Two of them are lizard genera present on most islands in the Anguilla bank (Anolis sp. and Pholidoscelis sp.) where they are typically represented by endemic species (Powell & Henderson, 2012). The remaining taxon is the red-footed tortoise, a non-native species that is today present on all major islands of the Anguilla bank and whose introduction date in the West Indies is subject to much debate. Tortoises of the genus Chelonoidis were present on the Anguilla bank since the Pleistocene (Lazell, 1993) but the

specific attribution of these remains to Chelonoidis carbonaria remain doubtful, and this

species is absent in the Amerindian archaeological deposits of the region. An alternative

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hypothesis regarding the introduction of this turtle species to the Lesser Antilles were recently reviewed by De Massary et al. (2018), and it appears that they were most likely introduced to most regions during the 19th century.

From a general point of view, the data collected from the *Trou de Souris* bone assemblages indicates that the fauna of Tintamarre was probably strongly impacted by human activities during the last few centuries although the lack of isotopic dating of the material prevents any definitive conclusions. The biodiversity profile of this island is however unusual, as although it has suffered from the same extinctions that have occurred in many if not all of Lesser Antillean islands (rabbit, rice rat, and the *Alsophis* snake) other unusual extinction events (*Thecadactylus* and *Eleutherodactylus*) seem to point towards particularly strong environmental modifications of the island. However, conversely, the endemic Anguilla Bank skink (*Spondylurus powelli*) is still extant on the island despite skinks being nowadays extinct on most of the Lesser Antillean islands (Hedges & Conn, 2012). This could be related to the fact that the mongoose was never introduced to Tintamarre, which seems to be confirmed by our observations, and that the stone walls constructed by farmers on the island represent a very suitable and protective environment for these lizards, as suggested by Lorvelec et al. (2017)

Regarding terrestrial snails, our newly collected data enriches our knowledge of the biodiversity of these organisms on Tintamarre by doubling the number of taxa listed for this island. With one exception, all the species collected on Tintamarre are known from the neighboring island of St. Martin, to which this island was attached during the periods of low sea levels during the Pleistocene. The number of species recorded on Tintamarre is still however much lower, as no fewer than 40 species of snails have been recorded on St. Martin (Hovestadt & Neckheim, 2020). The terrestrial mollusk population of Tintamarre thus forms a sub-sample of the fauna of St. Martin, including calcicole (e.g. *Pupoides albilabris*,

Diplopoma crenulatum), xeric (e.g., Gastocopta spp.), and coastal (e.g., Pseudopineria viequensis) species.

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The only Tintamarre species absent from St. Martin is *Bulimulus lehmani*, a species present on the island of Anguilla, while the genus Bulimulus is currently represented on St Martin by Bulimulus diaphanus and B. guadalupensis (Breure, 1974). Bulimulus lehnmani was formerly observed on the island of St. Martin (Coomans, 1967; Bertrand, 2001), but these records are unreliable as they are not associated with a locality and this species has not been found during the systematic surveys carried out during the last few decades (Hovestadt & Neckheim, 2020). In this study, we demonstrate the past presence of B. lehmani on Tintamarre but this species is only represented by few old shells. The status of this species on the island still has to be demonstrated and it could have been unintentionally introduced from Anguilla during historical times as many Tintamarre workers were Anguillan inhabitants. The biogeographic distribution of Annulariidae on the Anguilla Bank is complex. One species is endemic to the northern island of Sombrero (Chondropoma julieni (L. Pfeiffer, 1866)), another is known to be endemic to Anguilla and the satellite islets (*Diplopoma sulculosum*), a third species is found in Anguilla and the limestone terrain of the southern part of St. Martin (Chondropoma pupiforme), and a final species (Diploploma crenulatum) is known only from the northern part of St. Martin but from the more southern islands of the Lesser Antilles below Martinique. Meanwhile, the specimens found in St. Bartholomew are identified as either D. sulculosom or D. crenulatum depending on the authors (Watters, 2014; Questel, 2017; Hovestadt & Neckheim, 2020). In this study the species of interest are the two Annulariid land snails Diplopoma crenulatum and Chondropoma pupiforme. The recovery of C. pupiforme shells from the Tintamarre caves and its absence in outdoor localities indicates that this species is currently very rare on the islet, if not already extinct. Furthermore, this record fills the gap of the distribution of this species between Anguilla and the island south of

St. Martin. The population of *D. crenulatum* collected at Tintamarre, with intermediate 420 421 characteristics between the St. Martin form and the Anguilla Island species (D. sulculosum), also suggests the presence of phenotypic and geographic intergrades between species of the 422 Diplopoma genus within the Anguilla Bank. The distribution of Annulariidae therefore is, or 423 would have been, much less fragmented than previous data suggests. 424 425 It is interesting to observe that the many invasive species currently present on St. Martin and 426 more widely in the West Indies are absent from Tintamarre. These species includes: Achatinidae, e.g., Subulina octona (Bruguière, 1789), and Allopeas gracile (Hutton, 1834); 427 Polygyridae, e.g., Polygyra cereolus (Megerle von Muhlfeld, 1816); various species of 428 Streptaxidae, including Streptartemon deplanchei (Drouët, 1859) and S. glaber (L. Pfeiffer, 429 430 1849); and some Caribbean species such as the Cuban Zachrysia provisoria (Pfeiffer, 1858) or the even more widespread Bulimulus guadalupensis (Bruguière, 1789). These absences 431 show that the initial land snail community of Tintamarre is potentially well preserved, which 432 433 could reflect restrictive environmental conditions and/or the limited frequentation of the island by human populations. The character profile of a preserved fauna is, however, 434 counterbalanced by the high proportion of species represented only by old shells in the 435 collected material, such as the abundant Diplopoma crenulatum, but also the rare shells of 436 Chondropoma pupiforme, Melaniella gracillima, Pupoides albilabris, Hyalosagda 437 subaquilla, and Bulimulus lehmani for which only a single or a very small number of 438 specimens were found. The fact that the collected remains are rare and do not present the 439 characteristic appearance of recent shells suggests that these species may no longer be extant 440 441 on Tintamarre. However, the period during which the collecting was carried out, at the end of the dry season, and only a year and a half after a major cyclone, may have impacted the 442 diversity we observed. A better assessment of the current mollusk fauna of the island, 443

including surveys carried out under better climatic conditions, is needed to resolve this issue.

Our data also demonstrates the value of cave deposits in documenting the malacological community of the island. All identified species were found in the *Trou de Souris* caves, with the exception of the very small Gastrocoptidae and the fragments of Oleacinidae (see Tab. 2) that were difficult to collect without the sampling and washing of sediment. Moreover, several species that were not observed in outdoors locations were collected in the caves (*Chondropoma pupiforme*, *Pupoides albilabris*, Bulimulidae sp.). This is probably related to the better preservation condition of the shells trapped in caves.

5 - CONCLUSION

Our study of the remains collected on the surface of two fossiliferous deposits on Tintamarre Island demonstrates the past occurrence of at least six vertebrate taxa as well as potentially six terrestrial snail species that are no longer present on the island. The lack of data regarding the age of the studied material prevents the association of these extinctions with any specific events but, based on events observed on several other islands in the Lesser Antilles, we propose several hypotheses linking these extinctions to a probable anthropogenic impact across the last few centuries.

It would be very interesting to build on these initial results concerning the past biodiversity of Tintamarre with an additional survey aiming to document its current terrestrial malacofaune and, of course, a proper excavation of the *Trou de Souris* caves. Such an excavation would provide an opportunity for a major improvement in our current knowledge and would enable (1) the addition of a chronological framework to our observations, (2) more precise identification of the taxa by obtaining more material and (3) a better characterization of the evolution of the biodiversity on Tintamarre. Finally, this island has proved to be very interesting, as the trajectory of biodiversity seems to deviate from the usual trends observed

and could therefore be very useful in testing several hypotheses regarding past and present 468 human impact on the Lesser Antillean fauna. 469 **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** 470 471 This study was conducted as a part of the ECSIT Project: « Écosystèmes insulaires tropicaux, réponse de la faune indigène terrestre de Guadeloupe à 6 000 ans d'anthropisation du milieu 472 », conducted by the CNRS with a financial support from the European PO-FEDER program 473 (grant n° 2016-FED-503), the Guadeloupe Regional Council, and the DAC of Guadeloupe. 474 The authors are grateful to the *Réserve naturelle de Saint-Martin* which provided vital support 475 to the carrying out of this project. We are also grateful to Alain Queffelec (CNRS) and 476 477 Christian Stouvenot (DAC Guadeloupe) who also took part in the survey. We also thank Christophe Henocq (Community of St. Martin) who provided useful insights and comments 478 regarding the historical and archaeological information available on Tintamarre. 479 REFERENCES 480 481 482 ALCOVER J.A., SANS A. & PALMER M., 1998 - The Extent of Extinctions of Mammals on Islands. *Journal of Biogeography*, **25**, (5), 913-918, 10.1046/j.1365-2699.1998.00246.x. 483 484 485 AUFFENBERG W., 1958 - 1958 West Indies Field Trip. unpublished typing report, University of Florida, 486 487 Miami. 488 489 490 BAILON S., BOCHATON C. & LENOBLE A., 2015 - New data on Pleistocene and Holocene herpetofauna of Marie-Galante (Blanchard Cave, Guadeloupe Islands, French West Indies): Insular 491 faunal turnover and human impact. Quaternary Science Reviews, 128, 127-137, 492 493 10.1016/j.guascirev.2015.09.023. 494 495 496 BAUMEL J.J. & WITMER L.M., 1993 - Osteologia. In J. J. Baumel, A. S. King, J. E. Breazile, H. E. Evans et J. C. Van den Berge (eds.), Handbook of Avian Anatomy: Nomina Anatomica Avium. Publications of 497

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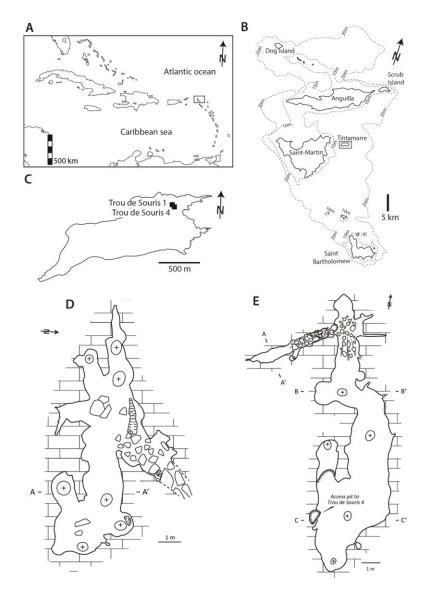


Fig. 1: Maps. (A) Map of the West Indies with the location of the Anguilla island bank. (B) Map of the Anguilla island bank with the location of Tintamarre Island. C) Map of Tintamarre Island with the location of the *Trou de Souris* 1 and 4 sites. (D) Map of *Trou de Souris* 1. (E) Map of *Trou de Souris* 4.

Fig. 1: Cartes et plans. (A) Carte des Antilles avec la localisation du banc d'Anguilla. (B)
Carte du banc d'Anguilla avec la localisation de l'île de Tintamarre. (C) Carte de l'île de

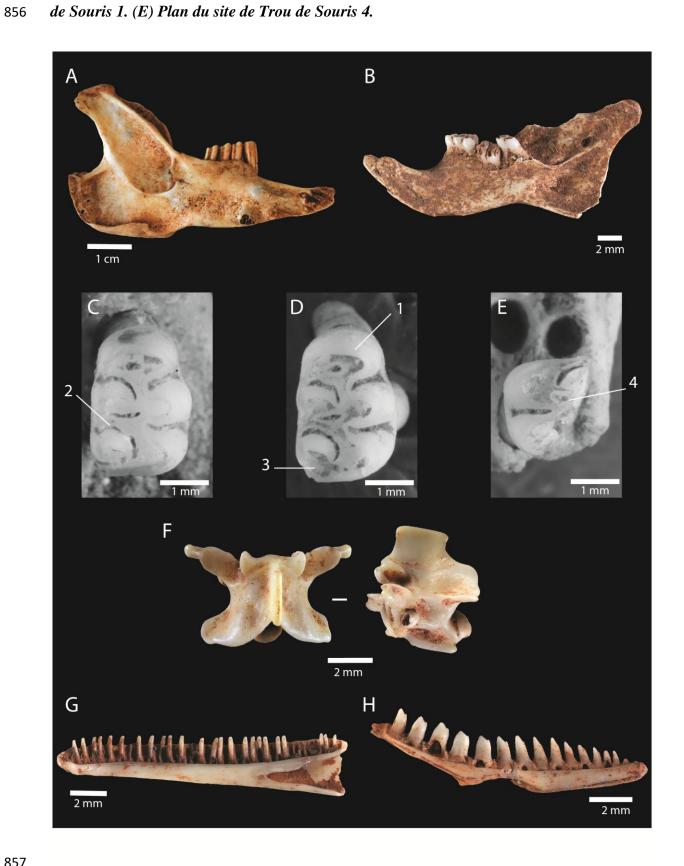


Fig. 2: Some of the most characteristic vertebrate remains identified from the sites of 858 859 Trou de Souris 1 and 4. (A) Lingual view of a left mandible of Oryctolagus cuniculus. (B) Lingual view of a right mandible of Rattus rattus. (C) Occlusal view of a right M1 of 860 Pennatomys nivalis. (D) Occlusal view of a right M1 of Pennatomys nivalis. (E) Occlusal 861 view of a right M2 of *Pennatomys nivalis*. (F) Trunk vertebra of *Alsophis* sp. in dorsal view 862 (left) and lateral view (right). (G) Lingual view of a right dentary of *Thecadactylus* sp. (H) 863 Lingual view of a left dentary of *Pholidoscelis* sp. <u>Dental structures:</u> 1: Anteromedian flexus 864 absent. 2: well-developed mesoloph. 3: Posteroflexus as a notch at the posterior margin of the 865 metacone, 4: mesoflexus present as a single internal fossette. Terminology according to Reig 866 867 (1977).Fig. 2 : Quelques-uns des ossements de vertébrés les plus caractéristiques identifiés dans les 868 sites de Trou de Souris 1 et 4. (A) Mandibule gauche d'Oryctolagus cuniculus en vue 869 linguale. (B) Mandibule droite de Rattus rattus en vue linguale. (C) Vue occlusale d'une M1 870 droite de Pennatomys nivalis. (D) Vue occlusale d'une M1 droite de Pennatomys nivalis. (E) 871 Vue occlusale d'une M2 droite de Pennatomys nivalis. (F) Vertèbre troncale d'Alsophis sp. 872 en vue dorsale (gauche) et vue latérale (droite). (G) Dentaire droit de Thecadactylus sp. en 873 vue linguale. (H) Dentaire gauche de Pholidoscelis sp. en vue linguale. Structures dentaires: 874 1: absence du flexus antero-médian. 2: Mésolophe bien développé. 3: Posteroflexus formant 875 une encoche sur la marge postérieure du métacone, 4: Mésoflexus présent sous la forme 876 d'une fossette interne unique. Terminologie suivant Reig (1977). 877

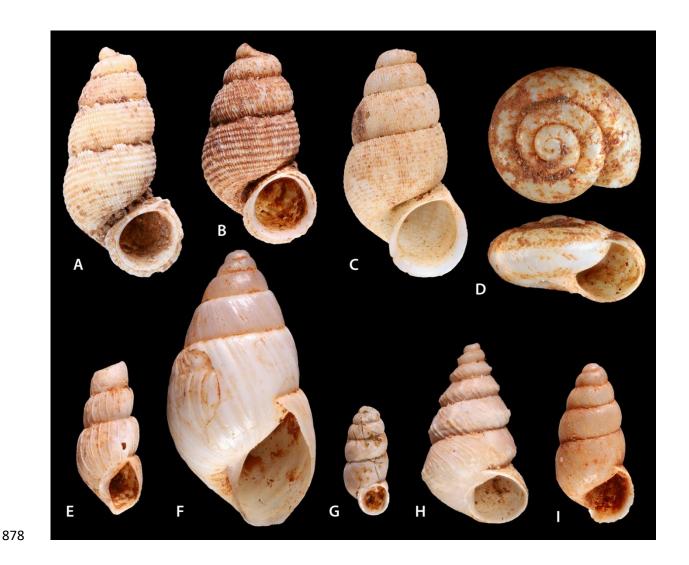


Fig. 3: Lateral views of some of the terrestrial snail shells collected on Tintamarre Island. Sampling location in brackets. (A) *Diplopoma crenulatum* (SXM-009), elongate conic morph, height = 11.9 mm. (B) *Diplopoma crenulatum* (TS4), short conic morph, height = 8.4 mm. (C) *Chondropoma pupiforme* (TS1), height = 11.5 mm. (D) *Hyalosagda subaquila* (TS4), diameter = 4.4 mm. (E) *Melaniella gracillima* (SXM_009), height = 3.3 mm; F: *Bulimulus lehmani* (TS4), height = 12.8 mm. (G) *Gastrocopta barbadensis* (TS4), height = 2.3 mm. (H) *Pseudopineria viequensis* (SXM_009), height = 4.9 mm. (I) *Pupoides albilabris* (TS4), height = 3.8 mm.

Fig. 3: Vues latérales de certaines des coquilles d'escargots terrestres collectées sur l'îlet Tintamarre. La station de collecte est indiquée entre parenthèses. (A) Diplopoma crenulatum,

morphe allongé conique (SXM_009), hauteur = 11,9 mm. (B) Diplopoma crenulatum, morphe conique trapus (TS4), hauteur = 8,4 mm. (C) Chondropoma pupiforme (TS1), hauteur = 11,5 mm. (D) Hyalosagda subaquila (TS4), diamètre= 4,4 mm. (E) Melaniella gracillima (SXM-009), hauteur = 3,3 mm. (F): Bulimulus lehmani (TS4), hauteur = 12,8 mm. (G) Gastrocopta barbadensis (TS4), hauteur = 2,3 mm. (H) Pseudopineria viequensis (SXM-009), hauteur = 4,9 mm. (I) Pupoides albilabris (TS4), hauteur = 3,8 mm.

			Trou de Souris 1	Trou de Souris 4
Mammalia	Rodentia	Rattus rattus	1	
		Pennatomys nivalis	3	1
		Mus musculus	6	3
		Dasyprocta leporina	1	
		Unidentified	76	25
	Lagomorpha	Oryctolagus cuniculus	22	6
	Artiodactyla	Caprinae	11	
	Carnivora	Felis catus	1	
	Chiroptera	Phyllostomidae	1	
	Unidentified	Unidentified	6	3
Squamata	Serpentes	Alsophis sp.	85	6
		Colubridae ind.	31	3
	Lacertilia	Anolis sp.	56	34
		Thecadactylus sp.	24	38
		Pholidoscelis sp.	10	7
	Unidentified	Unidentified	5	
Testudines		cf. Chelonoidis carbonaria	4	
Aves	Columbiformes	Columbina passerina	3	
		cf. Columbina passerina	2	
		Zenaida cf. aurita		1
	Passeriformes	Margarops fuscatus	1	
	Unidentified	Unidentified	1	1
Amphibia	Anura	Eleutherodactylus sp.	1	1
Ve rte brata		Unidentified	38	2
<u> </u>		Tota	1 389	131

Tab. 1: Numbers of vertebrate bone remains collected and identified from the sites of *Trou de Souris* 1 and 4.

			Trou de Souris			Outdoor localities				
Order	Family	Species	TS1	TS4	009	012	013	014	015	016
Littorinimorpha	Annulariidae									
		Chondropoma pupiforme	+	+						
		Diplopoma crenulatum 1	+	+	+	+	+			
Stylommatophora	Sagdidae									
		Hyalosagda subaquilla		+	+					
	Oleacinidae									
		Melaniella gracillima			+					
	Bulimulidae									
		Bulimulus lehmani		+					+	
		gen et sp. indet		+						
	Gastrocoptidae									
		Gastrocopta barbadensis * †			+			+		+
		Gastrocopta pellucida						+		
		Gastrocopta polyptyx *								
		Gastrocopta servilis * †						+		
	Pupillidae									
		Pupoides albilabris * 1		+						
	Urocoptidae									
		Pseudopineria viequensis 1	+	+	+		+		+	+
	Achatinidae									
		Allopeas micra 1								
		* : reconnu par Haas (1960)								
		t : reconnu par Hovestadt et Ne	ckheim (2020)						
		1. Teconina par 110vestada et Ne	CKIICIII (2020)						

Tab. 2: Presence versus absence data of the identified species of terrestrial snails at the two sites of Trou de Souris 1 and 4 and at several outdoor localities. Species with an asterisk are those previously found on Tintamarre by Haas (1960), and those with a dagger by Hovestadt and Neckheim (2020).

Tab. 2 : Données d'occurrence des escargots terrestres dans les deux sites de Trou de Souris 1 et 4 ainsi que dans les lieux de prélèvement en plein-air. Les espèces marquées d'un astérisque sont celle mentionnées précédemment sur Tintamarre par Haas (1960), et celle marquée d'un obèle les espèces listées par Hovestadt et Neckheim (2020).