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# Checklist and Key to the Millipede Species of Georgia, United States, with Notes on Distribution

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Millipedes are an exceptionally diverse class of animals that have an impact on soil structure and nutrient cycling. Despite their abundance, importance, and wide distribution, they are understudied compared to other animal taxa, and biogeographical information is scant. Georgia, though the largest state by land area east of the Mississippi River, has largely been overlooked by regional millipede checklists. Without baseline species distributions and abundances to inform wildlife management decisions, sufficient measures cannot be taken to preserve millipede biodiversity, especially in light of recent changes in climate and land use. Taxonomic resources for millipede identification in North America are also slim, and few dichotomous keys to species exist. For the few keys that do exist, there is frequently a strong reliance on adult male specimens. Furthermore, it is impossible to navigate to these keys from broader identification resources without extensive prior knowledge.

The current goal for this project is to compile a checklist of all millipede species in Georgia and provide maps indicating distributions. Future goals include creating an illustrated dichotomous key to make the study more accessible to amateurs and to alleviate the need to rely on adult males to identify species.

Documenting species distributions has taken a two-pronged approach—firstly, to review existing literature for published millipede records within the state. These records will be retrogeoreferenced in order to be accurately mapped. Secondly, to collect novel records ourselves, using gaps in published records to target areas with less documentation.