



fatmucket

Lampsilis siliquoidea

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Mollusca
Class: Bivalvia

Features

The fatmucket mussel shell is elongate or oval, thin to thick, and compressed (young individuals) to “inflated.” The anterior end is rounded. The posterior of males is bluntly pointed and that of females is squared. The dorsal and ventral margins usually are straight. The shell is smooth and yellow or yellowish green, sometimes tan or brown, with green rays of various widths that may become indistinct in older individuals. The inside of the shell is white or bluish white and it is iridescent toward the posterior end. The fatmucket mussel may attain lengths up to five inches.

Natural History

The fatmucket is found in lakes and small to medium-sized streams in mud, sand, or gravel. Its preferred habitat is shallow water near vegetation. Its distribution in Iowa is not well documented. Freshwater mussels have an elaborate reproductive system. During spawning, males release sperm into the water. The sperm are drawn inside the female's shell, where they fertilize eggs in her body. The fertilized eggs develop into larvae (glochidia) and are

stored for a time in the female's gills. When the glochidia mature, the female generally expels them into the water where they must attach as parasites to the gills or fins of fish. Larvae remain on the host fish for a period of weeks or months. Young mussels then detach from their host and drop to the bottom of the body of water. Hosts for this mussel include 13 types of fish, many common. Mussels are filter-feeders, bringing in water and the organic matter it contains through the incurrent siphon, filtering the particles out, then sending the rest of the water away from the body through the excurrent siphon. Particles filtered include plankton and detritus. Mature mussels spend most of their lives, which range from 10 to 100 years, partially or wholly buried in the bottom substrate.

Habitats

natural lakes and marshes; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs; Mississippi River; interior rivers and streams

Iowa Status

uncommon; native

Iowa Range

northeastern three-fourths of Iowa

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001. *Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.