



**HABITAT**

# TIDAL FLATS

Low Energy Calm





Water currents near **tidal flats** are quieter, allowing mud or sand to settle out; the fine sands, silts, and clay particles trap a lot of organic debris, which is then broken down by bacteria and fungi.





**Mud snails** feed on **detritus** (decaying material) and algae on the surface of tidal flats.





**Moon snails** construct gelatinous sand grain egg cases, which sometimes can be found on the beach resembling fragile sand “collars”.

The **carnivorous channeled whelk**, laying its parchment egg case, is one of the largest snails inhabiting Long Island Sound; each disk will release several fully formed baby whelks.



The dark piece of shell, is the **operculum**, which acts as a door.





A **hard clam** feeds by drawing water in through one of its two siphons, straining plankton from the water, and discharging the water and its wastes through the other siphon.



Often, the only signs that **bivalve mollusks** are present in the tidal flats are their siphons extending from holes in the sand or mud as they filter microscopic plankton from the water.





**Softshell clams**, also known as steamers or long-necks, live in deep burrows in the flats and shallows; when disturbed, they shoot up a spurt of water.





**Razor clams**  
burrow in the  
mud or sand  
straight up and  
down; they are  
fast and deep  
“diggers”.



Small, translucent **sand shrimp** burrow in the soft bottom sediments and are important food for other animals.