

# Florida's Freshwater Mussels and Clams

More than 60 species of mussels and clams live in Florida's freshwaters. They usually inhabit shallow, sandy, bottoms of lakes and streams and are an important functional component of freshwater ecosystems. Their filter-feeding activity cleanses the water by removing bacteria, algae, and organic material. They are an important food source for many fish, birds, and mammals. Freshwater mussels and clams are affected by poor environmental conditions, therefore, their populations serve as valuable indicators of water quality and the overall health of aquatic ecosystems.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has protected seven Florida mussel species by listing them as Threatened or Endangered. These listed species occur from the Suwannee River system north and west to the Georgia and Alabama borders. Possessing or disturbing listed species is prohibited and can result in substantial penalties. The listed species are illustrated in this pamphlet and include Gulf Moccasinshell, Ochlockonee Moccasinshell, Chipola Slabshell, Shinyrayed Pocketbook, Fat Threeridge, Oval Pigtoe, and Purple Bankclimber.

Mussel species not listed as Threatened or Endangered by the USFWS may be collected for personal use by persons in possession of a valid Florida fishing license. The daily bag limit for these unlisted mussels is 10 per person (or 20 half-shells). The possession limit is two days bag limit (20 live individuals or 40 half-shells). Mussels can be taken by hand-picking only. Use of tools or power equipment for collection is prohibited. Freshwater mussels, live or dead, may not be taken for later sale. Contact the local office of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission if you have questions concerning mussel identification.



Dark Falsemussel



Pea Clam



Gulf Moccasinshell



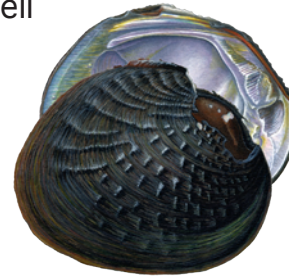
Ochlockonee Moccasinshell



Asian Clam



Florida Spike



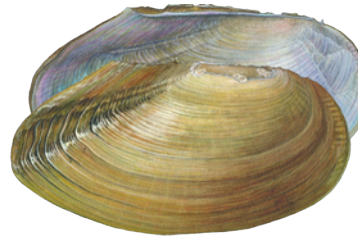
Suwannee Pigtoe



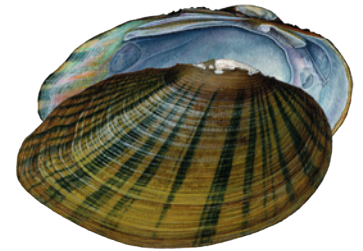
Oval Pigtoe



Chipola Slabshell



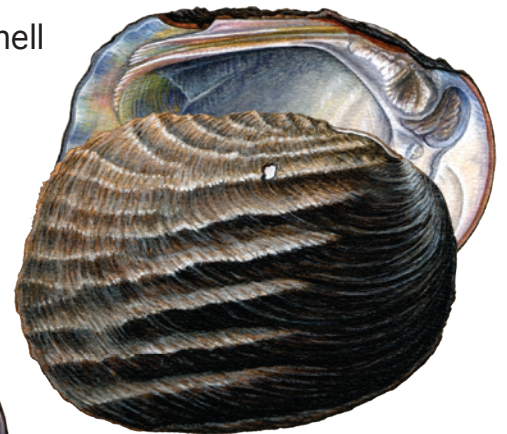
Paper Pondshell



Shinyrayed Pocketbook



Purple Bankclimber

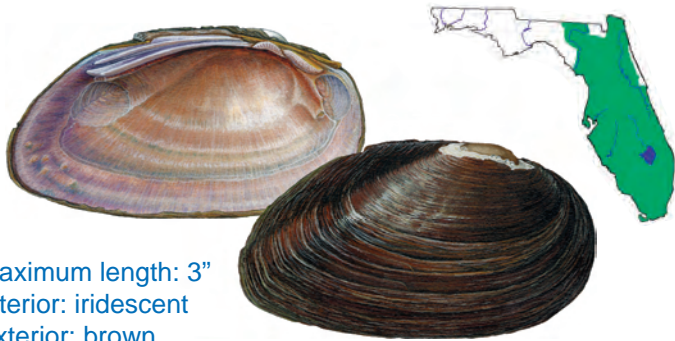


Fat Threeridge



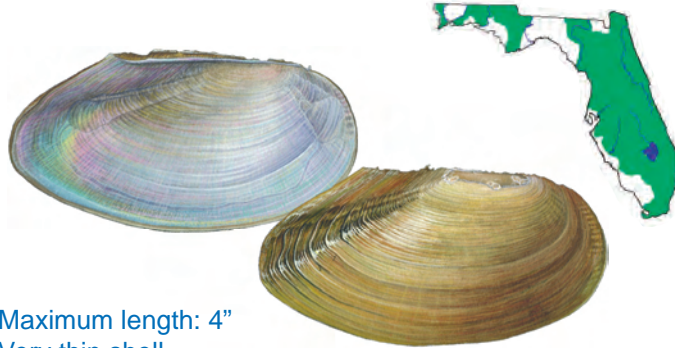
**Freshwater Mussels - Family:Unionidae**

**Harvest of unlisted species is restricted to 10 individuals (or 20 half-shells) per day**



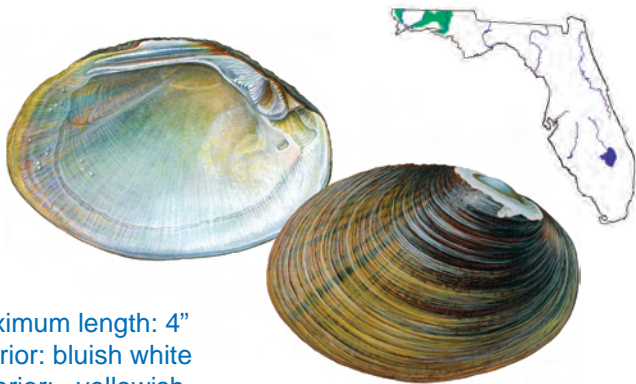
Maximum length: 3"  
Interior: iridescent  
Exterior: brown

Florida Shiny Spike  
*Elliptio buckleyi*



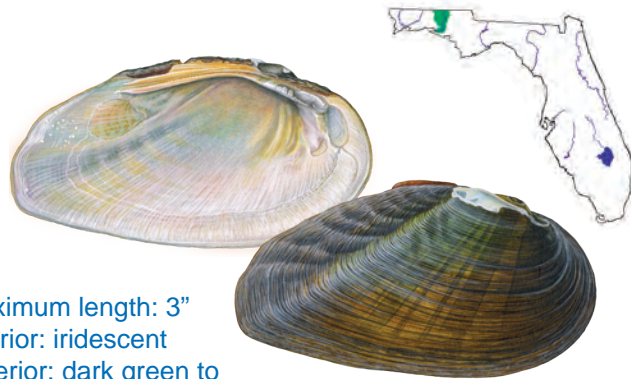
Maximum length: 4"  
Very thin shell  
Interior: iridescent  
Exterior: green-yellow to brown

Paper Pondshell  
*Utterbackia imbecillis*



Maximum length: 4"  
Interior: bluish white  
Exterior: yellowish brown with thin rays

Choctaw Bean  
*Villosa choctawensis*

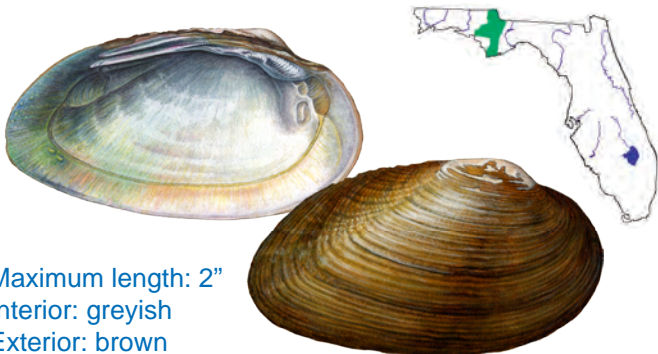


Maximum length: 3"  
Interior: iridescent  
Exterior: dark green to black with ridges & rays

Tapered Pigtoe  
*Fusconaia burkei*

**THREATENED OR ENDANGERED FRESHWATER MUSSELS**

**Harvest is illegal**



Maximum length: 2"  
Interior: greyish  
Exterior: brown with faint ridges

Gulf Moccasinshell  
*Medionidus penicillatus*

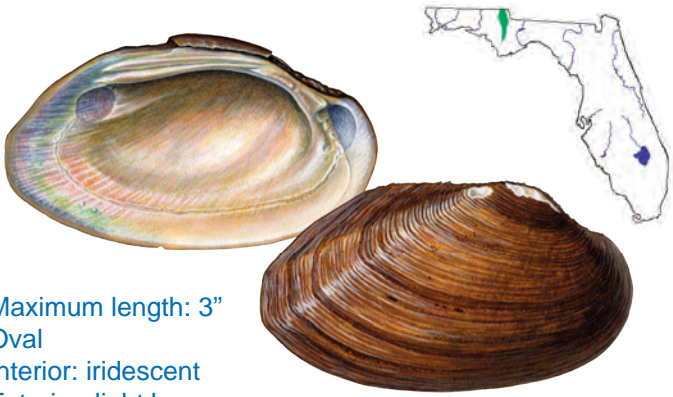


Maximum length: 2"  
Oval  
Interior: bluish  
Exterior: brown with ridges & rays

Ochlockonee Moccasinshell  
*Medionidus simpsonianus*

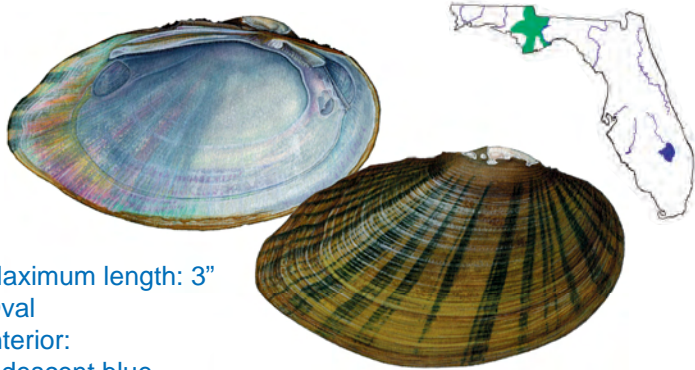
# THREATENED OR ENDANGERED FRESHWATER MUSSELS

Harvest is illegal



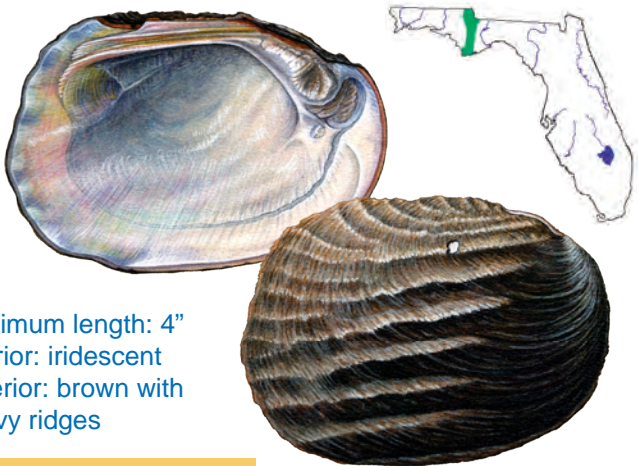
Maximum length: 3"  
Oval  
Interior: iridescent  
Exterior: light brown

Chipola Slabshell  
*Elliptio chipolaensis*



Maximum length: 3"  
Oval  
Interior: iridescent blue  
Exterior: green-yellow with rays

Shinyrayed Pocketbook  
*Hamiota subangulata*



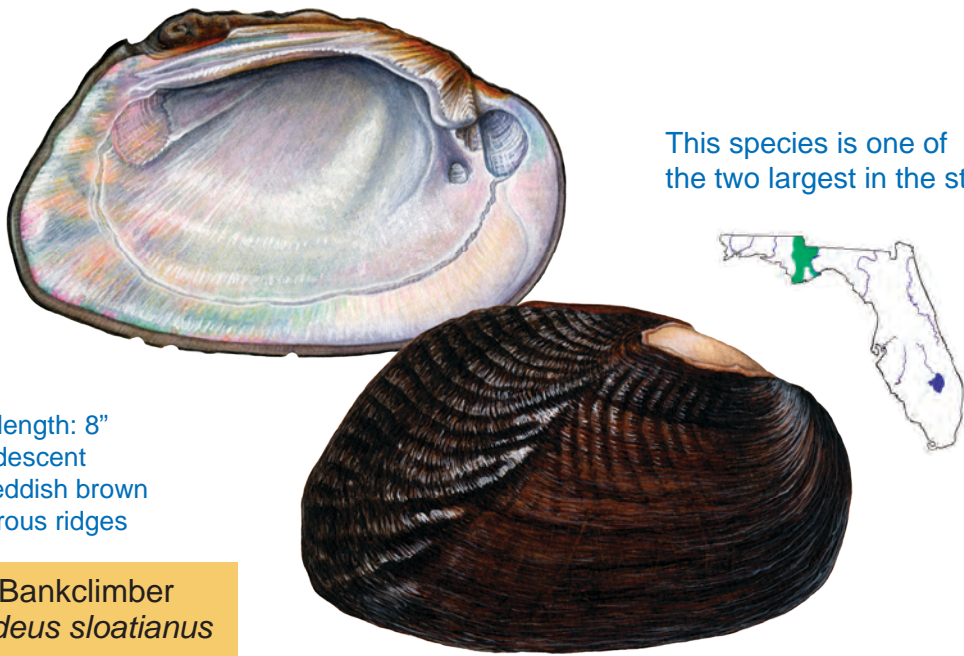
Maximum length: 4"  
Interior: iridescent  
Exterior: brown with heavy ridges

Fat Threeridge  
*Amblema neislerii*



Maximum length: 2"  
Oval  
Interior: bluish white  
Exterior: brown

Oval Pigtoe  
*Pleurobema pyriforme*



Maximum length: 8"  
Interior: iridescent  
Exterior: reddish brown with numerous ridges

Purple Bankclimber  
*Elliptoideus sloatianus*

This species is one of the two largest in the state

# Estuarine Species Sometimes Found in Coastal Fresh Waters

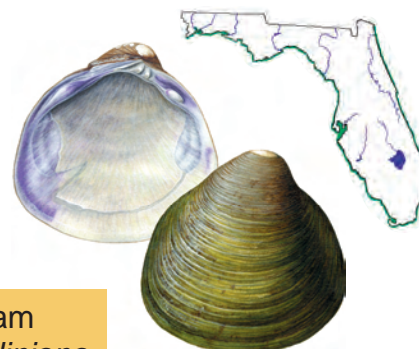
**Harvest is not restricted**

Maximum length: 3"  
Interior: bluish white  
Exterior: yellow to brown



Atlantic Rangia  
*Rangia cuneata*

Maximum length: 3.5"  
Interior: white with purple  
Exterior: yellow to brown

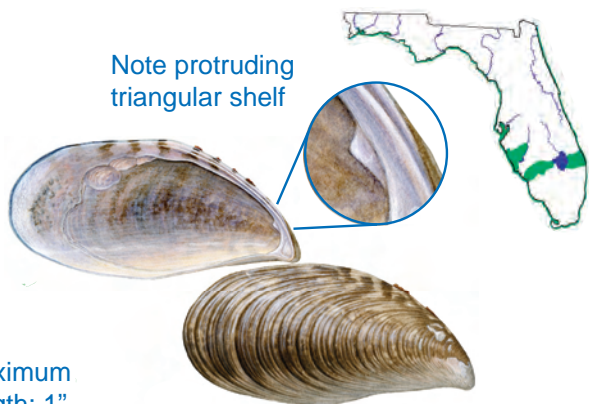


Carolina Marshclam  
*Polymesoda caroliniana*

## Native Species and Their Invasive Look-alikes

**Native Species**

Note protruding triangular shelf



Maximum length: 1"

**Harvest not restricted.**

Dark Falsemussel  
*Mytilopsis leucophaeta*

**Invasive Species!**

**Not known to occur in Florida**

Maximum length: 1.5"  
Interior: pearly grey  
Exterior: brown markings may vary from striped to plain



**Possession prohibited. If you think you see a Zebra Mussel in Florida, please report to**

**1-352-955-3220  
Ext 110**

Zebra Mussel  
*Dreissena polymorpha*

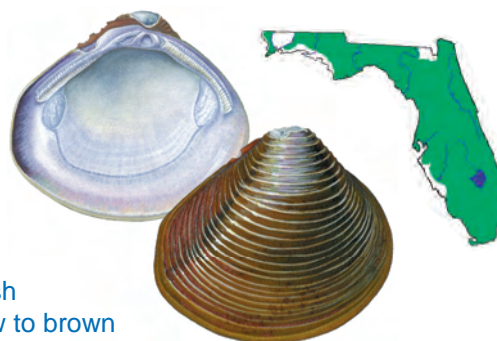


Maximum length: 0.5"  
Interior: creamy grey  
Exterior: light brown

**Harvest not restricted.**

Fingernail Clam or Pea Clam *Eupera, Musculium, Sphaerium or Pisidium sp.*

Maximum length: 2"  
Ridged shell  
Interior: purplish  
Exterior: yellow to brown



**Harvest not restricted.**

Asian Clam  
*Corbicula fluminea*

**The Asian Clam is common throughout Florida.**

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