



# Florida's FRESHWATER MUSSELS AND CLAMS

More than 60 species of mussels and clams live in Florida's freshwaters. They usually inhabit shallow and 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 16 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.



**ILLEGAL**

Harvest is illegal.

# Threatened or Endangered Freshwater Mussels

## Fat Threeridge

*Amblema neislerii*



20 mm



**Endangered**

Maximum length: 4.5" (120 mm)

Interior: white to bluish white

Exterior: brown with heavy ridges

## Chipola Slabshell

*Elliptio chipolaensis*



20 mm



**Threatened**

Maximum length: 3.4" (85 mm)

Interior: white to bluish white

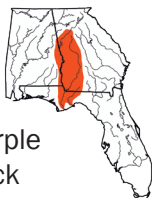
Exterior: yellowish brown to brown

## Purple Bankclimber

*Elliptoideus sloatianus*



20 mm



**Threatened**

Maximum length: 8.5" (220 mm)

Interior: white to bluish white to purple

Exterior: dark olive to brownish black with ridges

## Tapered Pigtoe

*Fusconaia burkei*



20 mm



**Threatened**

Maximum length: 3" (76 mm)

Interior: white to bluish white

Exterior: dark brown to black with ridges

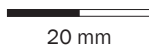
**ILLEGAL**

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## Threatened or Endangered Freshwater Mussels

### Narrow Pigtoe

*Fusconaia escambia*



**Threatened**

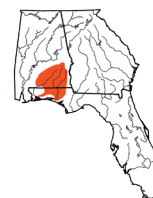
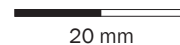
Maximum length: 3" (76 mm)

Interior: white

Exterior: reddish brown to black

### Southern Sandshell

*Hamiota australis*



**Threatened**

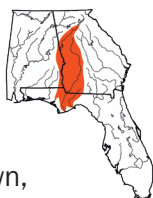
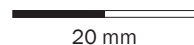
Maximum length: 3.4" (85 mm)

Interior: white to bluish white

Exterior: dark olive, brown to black

### Shinyrayed Pocketbook

*Hamiota subangulata*



**Endangered**

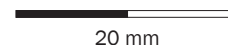
Maximum length: 3.4" (85 mm)

Interior: white to bluish white

Exterior: yellowish, tan to dark brown,  
with green rays

### Alabama Moccasinshell

*Medionidus acutissimus*



**Endangered**

Maximum length: 1.5" (40 mm)

Interior: white to bluish gray

Exterior: yellowish to brown  
with green rays and ridges

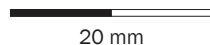
**ILLEGAL**

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## Threatened or Endangered Freshwater Mussels

### Gulf Moccasinshell

*Medionidus penicillatus*



#### Threatened

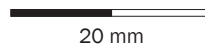
Maximum length: 2" (51 mm)

Interior: white to bluish gray

Exterior: greenish yellow to dark brown  
with green rays and ridges

### Ochlockonee Moccasinshell

*Medionidus simpsonianus*



#### Endangered

Maximum length: 2" (51 mm)

Interior: white to bluish gray

Exterior: greenish yellow to brown  
with green rays and ridges

### Suwannee Moccasinshell

*Medionidus walkeri*



#### Threatened

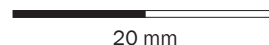
Maximum length: 2" (51 mm)

Interior: white to bluish gray

Exterior: greenish yellow to brown  
with green rays and ridges

### Choctaw Bean

*Obovaria choctawensis*



#### Endangered

Maximum length: 1.7" (43 mm)

Interior: white to bluish white

Exterior: yellowish green to dark olive,  
brown, or black with dark green rays

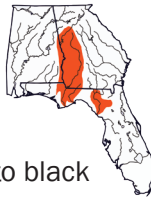
**ILLEGAL**

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# Threatened or Endangered Freshwater Mussels

## Oval Pigtoe

*Pleurobema pyriforme*



**Endangered**

Maximum length: 2" (51 mm)

Interior: white to bluish white

Exterior: yellowish brown to brown to black

## Fuzzy Pigtoe

*Pleurobema strodeanum*



**Threatened**

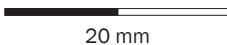
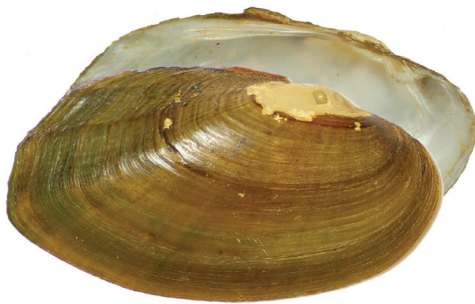
Maximum length: 2.5" (64 mm)

Interior: white

Exterior: yellowish brown to olive to black

## Southern Kidneyshell

*Ptychobranchnus jonesi*



**Endangered**

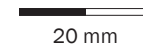
Maximum length: 2" (51 mm)

Interior: bluish white

Exterior: greenish yellow to olive to black with faint green rays

## Round Ebonyshell

*Reginaia rotulata*



**Endangered**

Maximum length: 2" (51 mm)

Interior: white

Exterior: dark olive brown to black

# Freshwater Mussels – Family: Unionidae

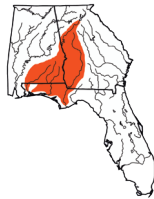
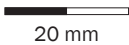
## RESTRICTED

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.

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

### Gulf Spike

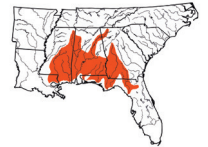
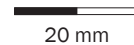
*Elliptio pullata*



**Maximum length:** 4.5" (110 mm)  
**Interior:** purplish  
**Exterior:** brown to black

### Southern Fatmucket

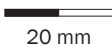
*Lampsilis straminea*



**Maximum length:** 4.7" (120 mm)  
**Interior:** white  
**Exterior:** yellowish brown

### Giant Floater

*Pyganodon grandis*



**Maximum length:** 5" (130 mm)  
**Interior:** white to bluish white  
**Exterior:** yellowish green to olive brown to black

### Washboard

*Megaloniais nervosa*



**Maximum length:** 8.5" (220 mm)  
**Interior:** white to bluish white  
**Exterior:** olive brown to black

## Other Freshwater Mussels of Florida

Southern Elktoe

(*Alasmidonta triangulata*)

Threeridge (*Amblema plicata*)

Sculptured Pigtoe (*Cyclonaias infucata*)

Florida Mapleleaf (*C. kleiniana*)

Purple Pigtoe (*C. succissa*)

Southern Lance (*Elliptio ahenea*)

Delicate Spike (*E. arctata*)

Elephantear (*E. crassidens*)

Brother Spike (*E. fraterna*)

Gulf Slabshell (*E. fumata*)

Florida Spike (*E. jayensis*)

Fluted Elephantear (*E. mcMichaeli*)

St. Johns Elephantear (*E. monroensis*)

Hidden Spike (*E. occulta*)

Inflated Spike (*E. purpurella*)

Round Pearlshell (*Glebulina rotundata*)

Florida Sandshell (*Lampsilis floridensis*)

Southern Pocketbook (*L. ornata*)

Bankclimber

(*Plectomerus dombeyanus*)

Rayed Creekshell (*Strophitus radiatus*)

Flatwoods Creekshell (*S. williamsi*)

Lilliput (*Toxolasma parvum*)

Iridescent Lilliput (*T. paulum*)

Gulf Lilliput (*T. sp. cf. corvunculus*)

Eastern Pondhorn

(*Unio merus carolinianus*)

Apalachicola Pondhorn

(*U. columbensis*)

Pondhorn (*U. tetralasmus*)

Paper Pondshell (*Utterbackia imbecillis*)

Florida Floater (*U. peggyae*)

Peninsular Floater (*U. peninsularis*)

Barrel Floater

(*Utterbackiana couperiana*)

Cypress Floater (*U. hartfieldorum*)

Apalachicola Floater (*U. heardi*)

Flat Floater (*U. suborbiculata*)

Florida Rainbow (*Villosa amygdalum*)

Little Spectaclecase (*V. lienosa*)

Southern Rainbow (*V. vibex*)

Downy Rainbow (*V. villosa*)

### PRESUMED EXTINCT

Ochlockonee Arcmussel

(*Alasmidonta wrightiana*)

Haddleton Lampmussel

(*Obovaria haddletoni*)

## Estuarine Species Sometimes Found in Coastal Fresh Waters

**NOT  
RESTRICTED**

### Atlantic Rangia

*Rangia cuneata*



**Maximum length:** 3" (76 mm)

**Interior:** bluish white

**Exterior:** yellow to brown

### Carolina Marshclam

*Polymesoda caroliniana*



**Maximum length:** 3.5" (89 mm)

**Interior:** white with purple

**Exterior:** yellow to brown

# Native Species and Their Invasive Look-alikes

## Native Species

### Dark Falsemussel

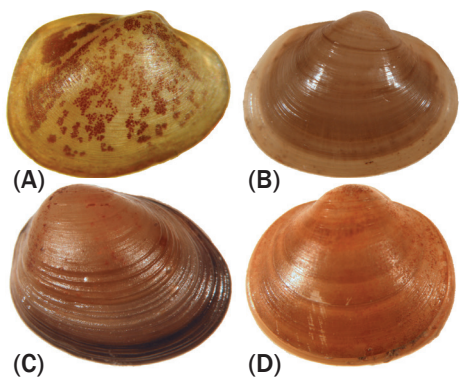
*Mytilopsis leucophaeta*



**Maximum length: 1"**  
Protruding triangular shelf (interior)  
Harvest not restricted.

### Fingernail Clam or Pea Clam

*A. Eupera, B. Musculium, C. Pisidium, or D. Sphaerium sp.*



**Maximum length: 0.5"**  
Interior: creamy grey  
Exterior: light brown  
Harvest not restricted.

## Invasive Species!

### Zebra Mussel

*Dreissena polymorpha*

Not known to occur in Florida



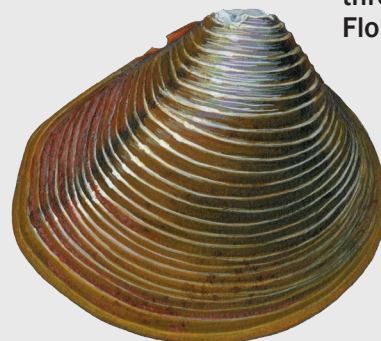
**Maximum length: 1.5"**  
Interior: pearly grey  
Exterior: brown markings may vary from striped to plain

**Possession prohibited. If you think you see a Zebra Mussel in Florida, please report to FWC's Exotic Species Hotline, 888-483-4681.**

### Asian Clam

*Corbicula fluminea*

Common throughout Florida



**Maximum length: 2"**  
Ridged shell  
Interior: purplish  
Exterior: yellow to brown  
Harvest not restricted.

