

# Rangia Clam: *Rangia cuneata*



**T**he Rangia Clam is a non-selective filter-feeder that turns large quantities of plant detritus and phytoplankton into clam biomass. Rangia was an important food source for early primitive peoples along the coast, but the meat is not very nutritious. However, the clams were eaten so much by indigenous people that the discarded mounds of shells were created along the waterway, called “middens,” some of which can still be seen today throughout the Lake Pontchartrain Basin.

From 1933-1990 Rangia Clams were harvested in Lake Pontchartrain. The shells were used for the construction of roadways, parking lots, levees and in the production of cement. However, this harvesting produced an increase in water turbidity and as a result, dredging in Lake Pontchartrain was banned in an effort to improve the overall health of the lake. Since then, the lake and the clams have rebounded fully.



Shell Midden