



Rare Animals of Louisiana

Louisiana Pearlshell *Margaritifera hembeli*

Federal Status: Threatened (February 5, 1988; September 24, 1993)
State Status: Endangered (December 20, 1989)

Rarity Rank: S1/G1

Identification:

- The shell of this freshwater mussel is oblong with moderately full beaks without obvious sculpture.
- The posterior ridge is low, the anterior end is rounded and the ventral margin is generally straight or slightly curved.
- The shell surface has uneven growth lines and, if sculptured on the posterior end, it is very faint.
- The epidermis is brown to blackish and the nacre is white to purple with numerous pits.
- Adults are about 100 mm (3.9 in) long, 50 mm (2 in) high and 30 mm (1.2 in) wide.



Gary Lester, La. Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries

Habitat: Small sandy streams within mixed pine hardwood forest.

Food Habits:

- Adults are detritivore
- Immatures are parasitic

Threats:

- Siltation, pollution, and other factors affecting water quality
- Beaver dams may also constitute a threat by changing the water flow in streams.

Beneficial Management Practices:

- Protect from siltation and pollution the streams where the species occurs
- Control beaver population
- Monitor population
- Research to identify life cycle and ecology of the species.

U. S. Range: AR, LA

References:

NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. 2006. Version 6.1. Arlington, Virginia, USA: NatureServe. Available: <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: Aug 28, 2009).

