

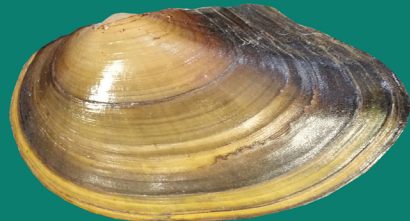
Common species



Alewife floater (*Anodonta implicata*)



Eastern elliptio (*Elliptio complanata*)



Eastern floater (*Pyganodon cataracta*)



Eastern lampmussel (*Lampsilis radiata*)

State listed species



Eastern pondmussel (*Ligumia nasuta*)



Tidewater mucket (*Leptodea ochracea*)

Not a mussel (invader)



Asian clam (*Corbicula fluminea*)



All images and artwork by Liese Siemann, except where credited

Freshwater mussels of Cape Cod

Why are mussels important?

Mussels keep our water clean. They filter our water and remove excess nutrients.

Mussels are ecosystem engineers. They improve habitat for other organisms.

Can you eat freshwater mussels?

Eating them is unwise. Freshwater mussels accumulate pollutants and they can be toxic.

Amazing fact

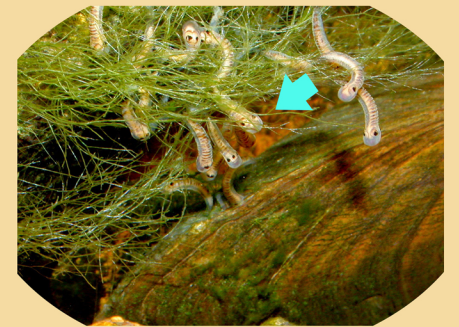
Freshwater mussels use fish hosts to reproduce. They have evolved amazing ways to interact with fish. And the fish lives!



The mussel can wiggle a lure that is part of its mantle (arrow) and looks like a very realistic small fish.

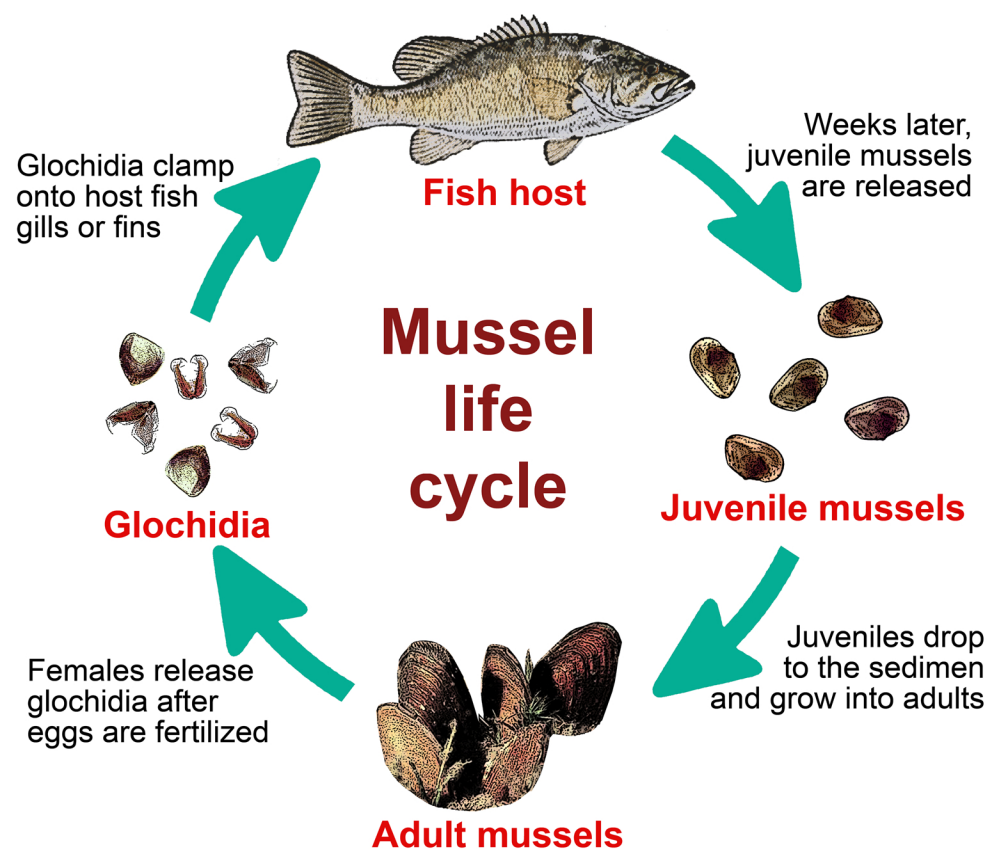


The mussel releases a lure on the end of a mucus cord (arrow). The lure moves in the water like a small fish.



The mussel releases sacs that are full of glochidia (arrow). These sacs look like worms or larval fish.

Lure photos from Chris Barnhart, Missouri State University



How can you help save our mussels?

If you find a live mussel in the water, leave it alone.
If you find a live mussel on the shore, put it in the water.
Keep our ponds and rivers clean - don't dump trash or chemicals in the water or on the ground.