

Dedicated to the Memory of Commissioner Enoch S. "Inky" Moore Jr.

PLAY

Spring
2007

Pennsylvania • League • of • Angling • Youth

Flex Your Mussel Knowledge

by Keith Edwards



▲
Creepers
mussel

Mussels are becoming harder to find. Mussels, along with snails and clams, are members of the mollusk family. This family is the world's second largest group of animals. There are about 100,000 mollusk species worldwide. A mollusk can be as small as a snail or as large as a 20-foot-long giant squid.

Freshwater mussels in Pennsylvania are called **bivalves**. Bivalves have two shells, or valves. They are filter-feeders. Water is pulled in through a **siphon**. Their gills filter the water for oxygen and **plankton** needed for food.

In the United States, there were once nearly 300 different freshwater mussel species. There are 50 mussel species remaining in Pennsylvania. It is estimated that 15 other species are **extirpated**, which means that they are no longer found in Pennsylvania.

This issue of PLAY focuses on the life history of mussels found in Pennsylvania, and some of the reasons why mussel populations are declining.

White heel splitter
mussel ▼



◀ Fatmucket
mussel



Spike mussel ▲