

Where do Mussels Live?

Mussels live on the bottom of rivers, streams and lakes. They like the shallow, sandy and gravelly parts, but some mussels can live in mud. Some mussel species prefer deeper and colder water than others. Some mussel species like faster-flowing water, while others choose habitats that have slower-moving current. Large mussel populations live in French Creek, a **tributary** of the Allegheny River, which is in the Ohio River Watershed. Some 26 different mussel species can be found there. The map on this page shows the number of species in each of the major river watersheds.

How do biologists identify different mussel species?

A **malacologist** studies mollusks. These biologists examine different characteristics to identify mussels: Shell size, thickness, shape, texture, color (inside and out) and patterns of lines, waves and bumps; color of the fleshy body; and the location where the mussel was found. Male and female mussels of the same species may have somewhat different sizes and shapes.

Number of Mussel Species Found in Pennsylvania's Major Watersheds

