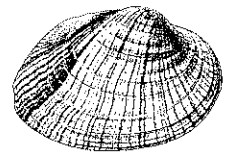
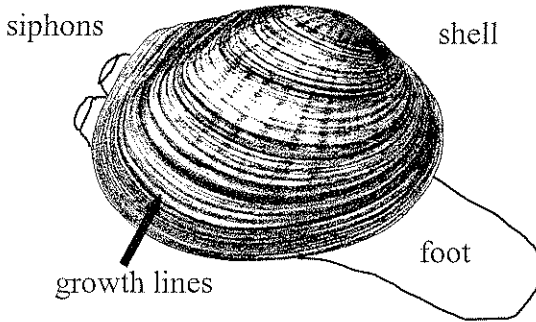


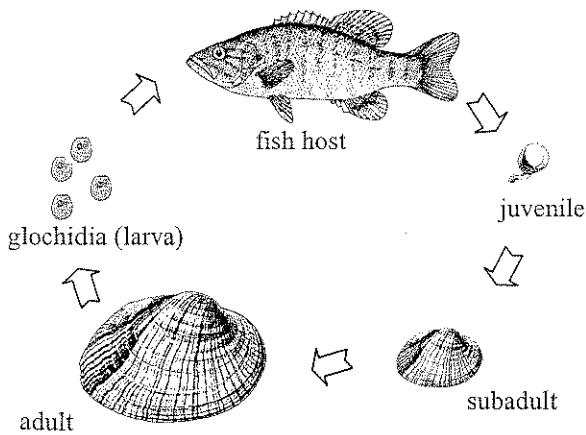
Freshwater Mussel Facts



Mussel Anatomy



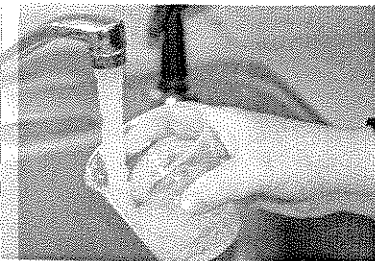
Mussel Life Cycle



Freshwater mussels have a complicated life cycle that requires a fish to complete.

- ◆ Are invertebrates with two hard shells like clams and oysters
- ◆ Live on the river bottom and move using a muscular foot
- ◆ Are microscopic when born
- ◆ 297 species in the U.S., 81 in Virginia, and about 20 in the James River Basin
- ◆ 37 threatened & endangered species in Virginia
- ◆ Are the most endangered group of animals in the U.S.
- ◆ Most declines have been caused by loss of habitat from water pollution
- ◆ Filter feed on bacteria, algae, and suspended particles
- ◆ Filter between 0.5 to 1.25 gallons/hour
- ◆ Can be aged by counting growth lines similar to that of a tree
- ◆ Some can live over 100 years

Benefits of Freshwater Mussels



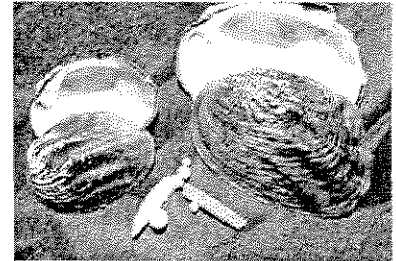
Clean water by removing bacteria, algae, and other particles



Serve as indicators of water quality in rivers and streams



A food source for wildlife including muskrats, wading birds, and fish



Shells are used in the production of cultured pearls