

MOLLUSKS AND CRUSTACEANS

TAN RIFFLESHELL

ABOUT

The Tan Riffleshell (*Epioblasma Florentina Walkeri*) is a medium-sized freshwater mussel. It has a brown to yellow shell, and like other freshwater mussels it feeds by filtering food particles from the water, although specific food habits of this species are unknown. The reproductive cycle of the Tan Riffleshell is similar to that of other native freshwater mussels. Males release sperm into the water, then the sperm are taken in by the females through their siphons (tubular organs for intake and output of water) during feeding and respiration. The females retain the fertilized eggs in their gills until the larvae fully develop. Mussel larvae (glochidia) are released into the water and within a few days must attach to an appropriate species of fish – like the Fantail Darter – for a short time while they develop into juvenile mussels.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1977 the Tan Riffleshell was designated an endangered species throughout its entire range in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia. Tan Riffleshells inhabit sand and gravel river bottom and are usually found in shallow water at the source of a river, stream, creek, or where shallow water runs swiftly. The species' decline has resulted primarily from habitat and water quality deterioration caused by pollution from mining, agriculture and construction activities. Because the Tan Riffleshell is so limited in its distribution, anything that affects its water habitat adversely could threaten its survival.

For more detailed information visit: www.ecos.fws.gov.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

In which states is the Tan Riffleshell found?

- a) Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming
- b) Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York State
- c) Washington, D.C., Maryland, and West Virginia
- d) Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia

Answer is D.

