



**Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Natural Heritage Program**

Obovaria unicolor
Alabama Hickorynut



Identification: This mussel has a round or elliptical shape; shell is nearly smooth, shiny, brown to yellowish brown with rays, young shells are green with green rays; mother-of-pear is pink but sometimes white or blue.

Measurements: A small mussel, 1.5 to 2 inches in length.

Taxonomic comments: No recognized subspecies.

Status: Global ranking is **G3** and state rank is **S1**.

Habitat: Sand and gravel bottoms in river systems.

Range: Eastern gulf drainages throughout Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Oklahoma.

Food habits*: Mussels are continually pumping water through their siphon. Their diet is composed of the various microscopic plants and animals from the water and organic matter from stream bottoms that they filter from this water.

Reproduction: Sexes are separate. No information on host fish available.

Reason for decline: 1) The damming of stream and rivers results in the loss of mussel and host fish habitat. 2) Channelization of large stream habitat. 3) Declining water quality as a result of siltation (reduces oxygen level) and heavy recreational use of habitat.

Interesting facts: This species is common only in the Sipsey River in Alabama. It is believed to have been uncommon or historically rare throughout the rest of its range.

* Indicates generalized information for freshwater mussels in the absence of information specific to this species

Known distribution in Louisiana:



Dates of documented observations are: 1977, 1979, 1988, and 1994

References

- McCullagh, W.H., J.D. Williams, S.W. McGregor, J.M. Pierson, and C. Lydeard. 2003. A historic and recent examination of the unionid (Bivalvia: Unionidae) fauna of the Sipsy River in northwestern Alabama: an aquatic hotspot. <http://bama.ua.edu/~clydeard/clam/> (June 28, 2003).
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- Vidrine, M.F. 1993. The historical distributions of freshwater mussels in Louisiana. Gail Q. Vidrine Collectables, Eunice, Louisiana.