

Rare Animals of Louisiana



Inflated Heelsplitter

Potamilus inflatus

Rarity Rank: S1/G1G2Q

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure



Steve Shivley, LDWF, Adult & Young

Identification:

- A large freshwater mussel that may reach 140 mm (5.5 in) in length
- The shell is oval in shape with thin, flared margins
- The outer shell is typically brown to black with a pink to purple nacre (mother of pearl)
- The dorsal (upper) margin of the shell extends upward into a high thin “wing”
- The mussel digs into the bottom of rivers, with the wing pointing upward, hence the name “heelsplitter”

Habitat:

Flowing rivers with stable sand or silt bottoms

Food habits:

Mussels are filter feeders that extract plankton and detritus by pumping water through their siphons

Range:

AL, LA, MS

Reproduction:

- Most freshwater mussels have a parasitic stage in which the glochidia (larvae) attach to the gills or fins of certain types of fish
- The host fish for this species is the freshwater drum

Threats:

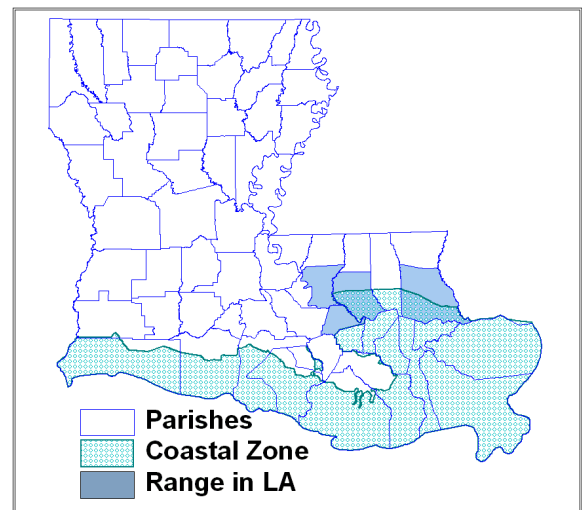
- Sand and gravel mining
- Channel alterations and impoundments for navigation and flood control

Beneficial Management Practices:

- Prevent erosion and siltation
- Follow Best Management Practices for Streamside Management Zones, possibly increasing width
- Limit sand and gravel mining

LA River Basins:

Pearl, Pontchartrain



Range based on occurrences in Natural Heritage database