



Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Natural Heritage Program

Quadrula cylindrica Rabbitsfoot



Identification: An elongated, rectangular, inflated mollusk. Shell color is green to dark brown with green v-shaped zig-zag patterns. The shell surface is rough and has large knobs that run along its ridge. Mother-of-pearl is silvery white; unusual black meat.

Measurements: Length is 5 inches.

Taxonomic comments: Two subspecies are currently recognized. *Quadrula cylindrica strigillata* is found in the Tennessee River drainage, including drainages in Louisiana. *Quadrula cylindrica cylindrica* is found in the Ohio River drainage.

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

Habitat: In sand and gravel substrates of medium to large rivers (up to 10 ft. deep) or in gravel bottomed small to medium, swift flowing streams.

Range: Found throughout the Mississippi, Ohio, Wabash, Cumberland, and Tennessee River drainages in 13 states.

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: Believed to be reproductive between May to July. Host species for parasitic stage include the spotfin shiner, whitetail shiner, and the bigeye chub.

Reason for decline: 1) Destruction of habitat as a result of channelization, dam formation, and dredging. 2) Loss of host species in habitats as result of siltation, drainage of bottomland lakes, swamps, and prairie marshes, pollution, and impoundments. 3) Zebra mussels. 4) Water pollution from industrial and residential discharge and agricultural run-off create environments with reduced oxygen and increased ammonia, fatal to many mollusks. The rapid loss of this species throughout many streams shows that it is very intolerant of poor water quality.

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

Interesting facts: 1) Rotenone, a toxin, is often added to bodies of water to increase sport fishery quality. This toxin has proven to be detrimental to both fish and mussels. 2) The subspecies *Quadrula cylindrical cylindrical* is listed as endangered in Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, and Ohio.

Known distribution in Louisiana:



Dates of documented observations are: 1992 and 1994

References

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