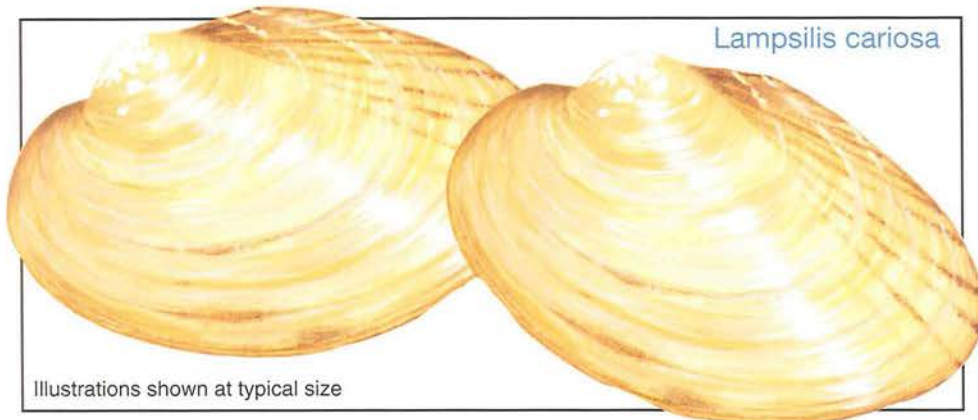




Yellow Lampmussel



Lampsilis cariosa

Illustrations shown at typical size

The yellow lampmussel then lives out its life filtering phytoplankton and organic particles for food without moving more than a small distance from where it landed.

How to Recognize a Yellow Lampmussel

The yellow lampmussel has an oval-shaped shell and an exterior glossy surface that varies in colour from bright yellow to reddish brown. The interior is coloured white to pink and has several strong hinge teeth. The soft parts of the body, called the mantle, are visible between the shell valves in living animals. The visible edges of the mantle are smooth and pigmented with grey streaks and dots. Although the yellow lampmussel has been observed as large as 110 mm in length, it is typically approximately 75 mm.

At a Glance

The yellow lampmussel is a freshwater species found only in two Canadian watersheds: the Sydney River and the Saint John River. Although there are few immediate threats, there are some long-term concerns.

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) has determined that the yellow lampmussel is a species of “special concern.” This designation is for species that are particularly sensitive to human activities or natural events, but are not threatened or endangered.

Yellow lampmussels play an important role in the ecosystem and natural food chain, although they are not a mussel that humans eat. When any species is removed, the entire balance of the ecosystem is shifted.

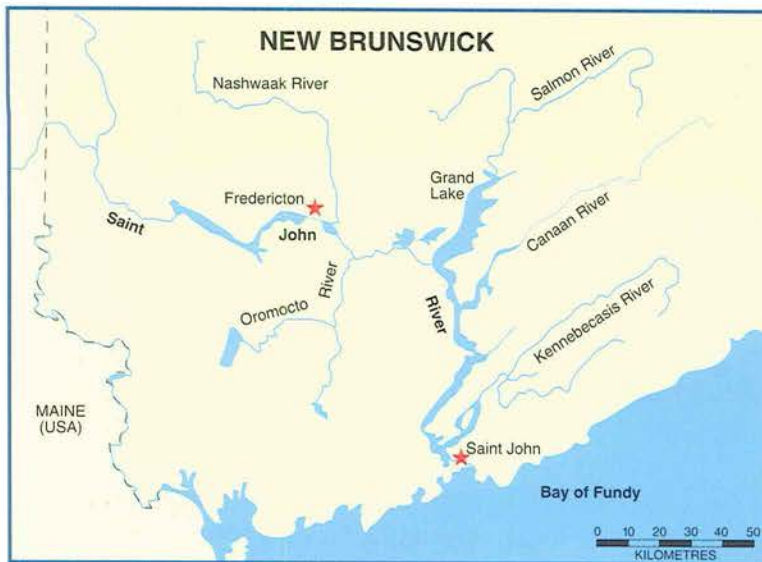
About the Yellow Lampmussel

Although they can live up to 17 years, the yellow lampmussel does its traveling while it’s young. The mussel larvae attach to host fish, commonly white or yellow perch. While attached, they hitchhike to wherever the fish happens to go. When the larvae mature, the young mussels drop from the fish to settle on the river bed below.

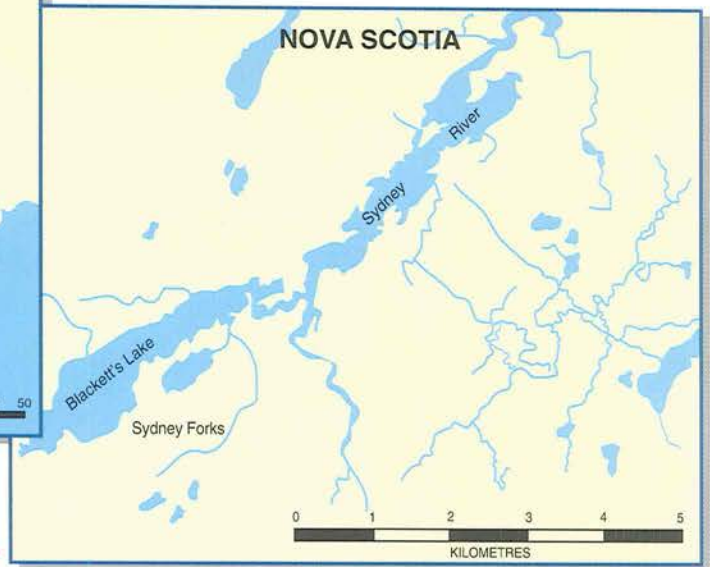
DID YOU KNOW?

The Nova Scotia population of the yellow lampmussel is isolated from the New Brunswick population by at least 500 km. It is thought that this species became established in the Sydney River, Nova Scotia, around 7000 years ago during the post-glacial period. At that time, sea levels were lower and there was a broad coastal plain with

several mature rivers that were likely suitable habitat for the yellow lampmussel. Since that time, the climate has cooled and sea-levels have risen thereby eliminating habitat. These changes isolated the Sydney River population, where conditions continue to be suitable and the population remains intact.



◀ Saint John River



Sydney River ▶

Distribution of the Yellow Lampmussel

In Canada, the yellow lampmussel is only known in two locations: the Sydney River, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia and the lower Saint John River near Fredericton, New Brunswick. Blackett's Lake, formed when the Sydney River was dammed in 1902, is the main centre of the yellow lampmussel population in Nova Scotia. Most of the Canadian population of yellow lampmussel is found below the head-of-tide in the main Saint John River, including five of its large tributaries and several large lakes.

Why It's at Risk

The yellow lampmussel is considered threatened throughout its range in the United States and is endangered or no longer found in certain United States watersheds.

Although Canadian populations appear to be quite large and stable, the yellow lampmussel is only found in two of our watersheds, making the survival of the Canadian population vulnerable to changes in these ecosystems. Long-term concerns for the yellow lampmussel population include: the potential for introduction of zebra mussels into the Saint John River and the challenge of maintaining habitat quality in the suburban environment surrounding the population in the Sydney River.

What You Can Do!

This species will get the protection it needs only if all Canadians work together to reduce threats. Find out more and do your best to reduce these threats wherever possible.

For More Information

Additional information can be obtained by visiting DFO's SARA web site as noted below or contact DFO at:

www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes/home_e.asp

E-mail:
CommEnquire@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Telephone:
1-800-782-3058