

monkeyface

Theliderma metanevra

FEATURES

The monkeyface mussel's thick shell has large knobs along a ridge on the posterior side. The anterior end is rounded while the posterior end is square and indented. The shell is brown. Young mussels may have a zig-zag pattern of green lines on the shell. The inside of the shell is white. This mussel grows to four inches in length. The name "monkeyface" comes from an indentation on the posterior margin of the shell that gives the appearance of the profile of a chimpanzee.

BEHAVIORS

The monkeyface mussel lives in rivers in areas of gravel or sand and gravel. This mussel often lives for more than 10 years, and some individuals may live for more than 100 years. The sexes are separate. The male releases sperm into the water. The female draws sperm in through the incurrent siphon, along with water and other particles. Eggs are fertilized internally. Fertilized eggs develop into an intermediate larval stage called glochidia. Glochidia are stored in the female's gills, allowing them a safe place to develop and providing plenty of oxygen. In the spring or summer, glochidia are released from the female into the water, where they begin their parasitic stage. Glochidia attach to a fish and form a cyst. Within the cyst, the larva transforms into the adult form, a process that may take from one to 25 weeks depending on the host, water temperature and place of attachment. The adult breaks free of the cyst and drops to the bottom where it begins its adult life, if conditions are favorable. Host fishes for this mussel species include sauger and sunfishes. The monkeyface is a filter feeder, bringing in water and the organic matter it contains through the incurrent siphon, filtering the particles out, then sending the rest of the water away from the body through the excurrent siphon. Particles filtered include plankton and detritus.

TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Mollusca
Class: Bivalvia
Order: Unionoida
Family: Unionidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

state threatened, native

ILLINOIS RANGE





inside and outside of shell



shell

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none