

Pill clams - Family Sphaeriidae

Abundance: Unknown

Status: NSSU

NatureServe: G5 SNR

Population Status: Unknown

Limiting Factor: Unknown

Comment: None

Introduction

Pill clams or fingernail clams are mollusks in the class Bivalvia (two shells). These clams are small (up to 1 cm wide) and live in the sediment of streams, rivers, ponds and lakes (Thorp and Rogers 2011). Fingernail clams are usually yellow, brown, orange, green or blue in color with growth lines on their shells. Four genera of fingernail clams are known from North America (*Pisidium*, *Musculium*, *Sphaerium* and *Eupera*) and are distributed across the continent. Forty-one species of fingernail clams are known in the United States and four are ranked as imperiled or critically imperiled (NatureServe 2016). Thirteen species are currently known from Wyoming in the genera *Musculium*, *Pisidium* and *Sphaerium* and they are all ranked as secure across their range. Fingernail clams are water-column filter feeders and do not require a host for reproduction and dispersal (Cummings and Graf 2010).

Habitat

Pill Clams or fingernail clams are generally found in sand to gravel-sized substrate of streams and rivers, and in fine sediments of ponds and lakes often with vegetation (Thorp and Rogers 2011).

Problems

h Lack of basic knowledge about the distribution and species present in Wyoming.

Conservation Actions

h None.

Monitoring/Research

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department funded the Wyoming Natural Diversity Database to survey aquatic molluscs in the Snake River drainage of Wyoming.

Recent Developments

None.

References

Cummings, K. S., and D. L. Graf. 2010. Mollusca: bivalvia. Pages 309-384 in J. H. Thorp and A. P. Covich, editors. Ecology and Classification of North American Freshwater Invertebrates. Academic Press, New York.

NatureServe. 2016. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application] Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: January 20,2016).

Thorp, J. H. and D. C. Rogers. 2011. Field Guide to the Freshwater Invertebrates of North America. Academic Press, New York.

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SOURCE: Digital maps of ranges for Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need: April 2010. Wyoming Game and Fish Department. A range map is unavailable for the taxa because distribution and ecology are poorly known in Wyoming.