

## Key to the Freshwater Bivalves of New Jersey

1. a. shell with a very sharp posterior ridge, shaped like the marine mussel, *Mytilus*, generally less than 30 mm, and attached to a hard substrate with byssal threads.....**Zebra mussel**
- b. animal without byssal threads attaching adult to substrate, with or without teeth but not with the above shape.....2
2. a. valves with cardinal teeth and two sets of lateral teeth.....3
- b. valves with one set of lateral teeth and pseudocardinal teeth or without teeth.....5
3. a. shell thick and sturdy, beak bulbous and curving anteriorly.....**Atlantic rangia**
- b. shell moderately thick, beak not bulbous nor curving.....4
4. a. valves with serrated lateral teeth.....**Asian clam**
- b. valves with smooth lateral teeth.....**Fingernail clam**
5. a. hinge teeth absent.....6
- b. hinge teeth present.....10
6. a. beaks not projecting above the hinge line..... **Paper pondshell**
- b. beaks projecting above the hinge line.....7
7. a. beak sculpture double looped or as bars.....8
- b. beak sculpture concentric and coarse, pseudocardinal teeth represented by a thickening near the beaks.....**Creeper**
8. a. ventral margin well rounded in young, shell thin, but thickens with age, size becomes colossal, beak sculpture appear as bars ..... **Chinese pond mussel**
- b. ventral margin relatively flat, or slightly rounded, beak sculpture double looped.....9
9. a. nacre salmon or copper colored, shell prominently thickened along the anterior ventral margin below the pallial line.....**Alewife floater**
- b. nacre bluish or white, shell uniformly thin, epidermis greenish.....**Eastern floater**
10. a. lateral teeth absent or reduced, neither functional nor interlocking.....11
- b. lateral teeth well developed, functional and interlocking.....13
11. a. fine transverse ridges on posterior slope present, posterior ridge rounded, pseudocardinal teeth reduced and elongate, shell rounded and usually less than 70 mm long..... **Brook floater**
11. b. fine transverse ridges on posterior slope absent, pseudocardinal teeth strong.....12
12. a. pseudocardinal teeth strong and triangular with rough surfaces, shell small to medium, triangular to ovate ..... **Triangle floater**
- b. pseudocardinal teeth pronounced and smooth, shell large, to 150mm, elongate, oval and kidney-shaped, shell very thick and heavy .....**Freshwater pearl mussel** (presumed extirpated)
13. a. right valve with two lateral teeth, rare..... **Dwarf wedgemussel**
- b. right valve with one lateral tooth.....14

- 14. a. height/length less than or equal to 0.48, posterior ridge prominent, posterior end of shell pointed; pseudocardinal teeth elongate, shell usually less than 110 mm in length.....**Eastern pondmussel**
- b. height/length greater than 0.48..... 15
- 15. a. nacre variable in color, can be purple, shell subrhomboid with well defined posterior ridge and slope, compressed as young, very common.....**Eastern elliptio**
- b. nacre white or colored but not purple.....16
- 16. a. left valve with small interdental tooth, giving the appearance of three pseudocardinal teeth, shell more or less compressed and subrhomboid in outline, epidermis dark green with numerous green rays or brown, adult shell less than 65 mm long, posterior ridge rounded.....**Green floater**
- b. left valve without interdental tooth, valve appears to have only two pseudocardinal teeth.....17
- 17. a. shell elliptical or wedge-shaped, small and inflated, less than 1.5 inches, outer shell surface with fabric-like texture.....**Lilliput**
- b. shell ovate or sub-ovate, inflated.....18
- 18. a. adult shell usually less than 80 mm in length, thin, hardly thicker anteriorly than posteriorly until older, beak more centrally located, epidermis dull yellow without rays or with fine rays all over the shell, in or near tidewaters.....**Tidewater mucket**
- b. adult shell often greater than 80 mm in length, much thicker anteriorly than posteriorly, may have obvious broad color rays.....19
- 19. a. shell without green rays or with green rays restricted to the posterior slope ..... **Yellow lampmussel**
- b. shell with rays all over (may be obscured in old adults), height/length less than 0.60 in males and in most females, posterior ridge low and rounded, beaks not prominent.....**Eastern lampmussel**

**Note: Much of this key was taken from Bogan, A.E. 1993.  
Workshop on Freshwater Bivalves in Pennsylvania**