



# Marsh Mussel

## *Geukensia demissa*



**Size and Description:** Size may exceed 10 cm (4 in). There are many closely-spaced ridges on exterior, and the shell is shell brown to black on the exterior, maybe greenish (but the Green Mussel does not have ribs) and white inside.

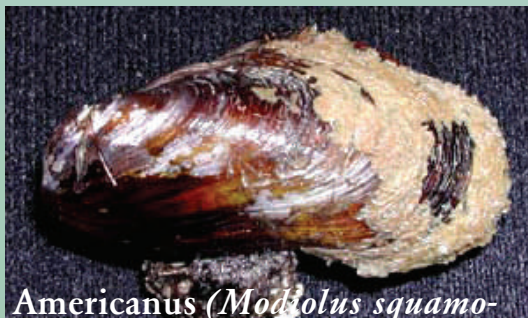
**Range and Habitat:** Occurs over a wide range of salinities—common in salt marshes, mangroves, on pilings, and on seawalls. Found from the Gulf of Maine to Florida and into the Gulf of Mexico. Also found in San Francisco Bay where it was introduced.

**Diet:** Mussels are filter feeders of phytoplankton from the water column and one of the few bivalves that can feed on the minute ( $> 4\mu$ ) bacterioplankton in the water column.

**Breeding:** Males and females can be distinguished by the color of the mantle, the tissue next to the shell (males are cream/yellow, females are medium brown). One annual spawning event takes place in the summer..

**Predators:** Chief predators are blue crabs and shorebirds.

**Threats to species:** Invasive species, particularly the Green Mussel from Pacific regions, poses the greatest threat to our native species by replacing them in their native habitats.



Americanus (*Modiolus squamosus*)



Scorched Mussel (*Brachiodontes*)



Hooked Mussel (*Ischadium recurvum*)

### REFERENCES

- <http://fishweb.ifas.ufl.edu/greenmussel/Our-NativeMussels.shtml>
- <http://fishweb.ifas.ufl.edu/greenmussel/Perna-Species.shtml>
- [http://www.sms.si.edu/irlspec/Geukensia\\_demissa.htm](http://www.sms.si.edu/irlspec/Geukensia_demissa.htm)

Borrero FJ. 1987. Tidal height and gametogenesis: reproductive variation among populations of *Geukensia demissa*. Biological Bulletin 173:160-168.

Newell SY and C Krambeck. 1995. Responses of bacterioplankton to tidal inundations of a saltmarsh in a flume and adjacent mussel enclo-