

FRESHWATER MUSSELS

ESSENTIAL TO THE HEALTH OF OUR RIVERS

Freshwater mussels play an important role in maintaining water quality. By feeding on plankton and organic particles, a single mussel can filter up to 40 litres of water per day.

The presence of freshwater mussels in streams and rivers of our watershed is a good indicator of water quality. They are a key group of invertebrates to protect since the preservation of their habitat is beneficial to many other aquatic species, including fish.

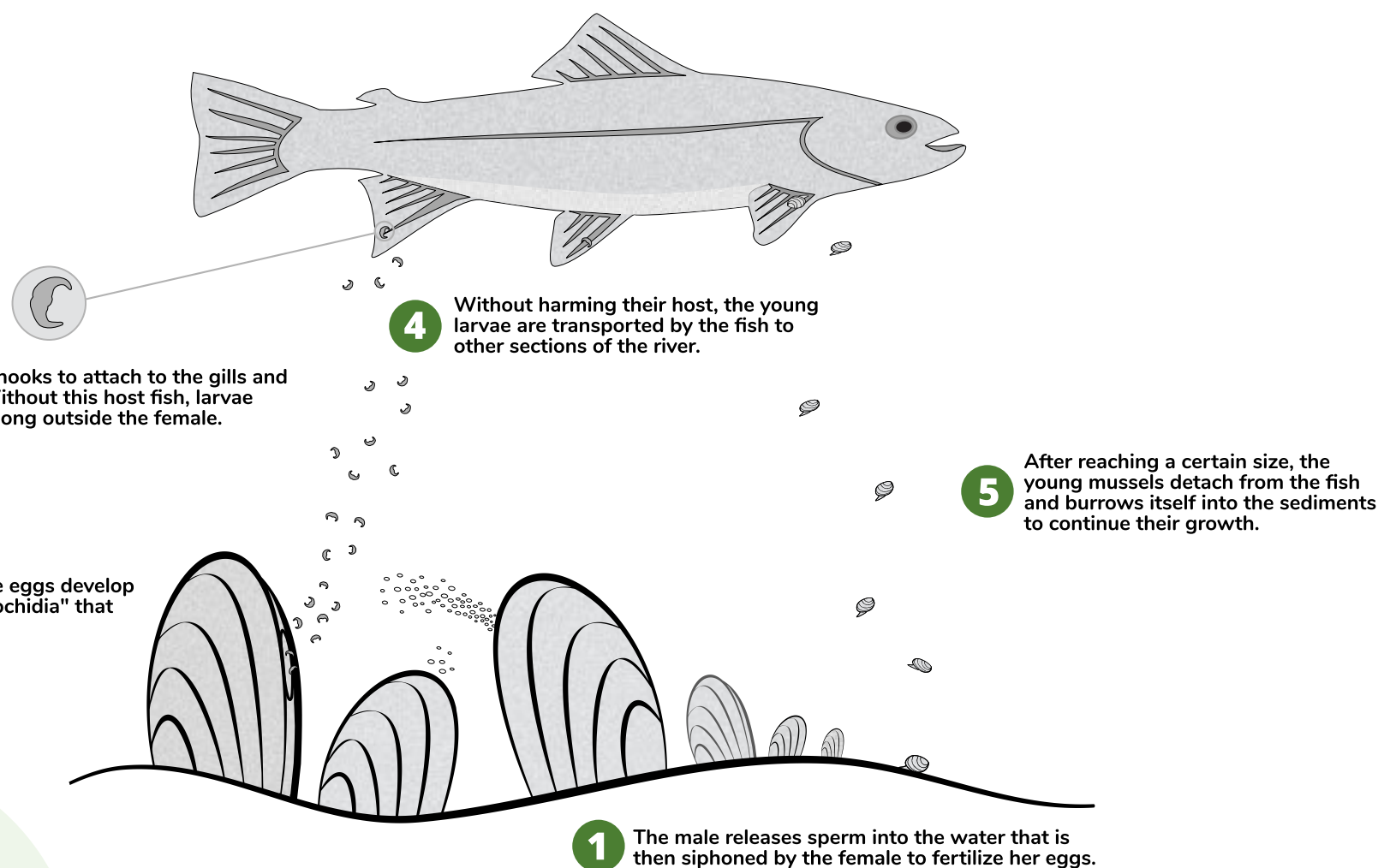
In Canada and elsewhere in the world, freshwater mussel populations are seriously declining. Of these, the Brook Floater, only found in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and the Northeastern United States, is listed as "Special Concern" under the *Species and Risk Act*. It received its official status after disappearing from about half of the sites where it was found.



BROOK FLOATER *Alasmidonta varicosa*

- Medium-sized mussel - between 5 and 7 cm in length
- Has a smooth and rounded kidney-shaped shell, with growth lines forming ridges
- Its colour varies from yellow-green to brown-black with dark rays perpendicular to the growth lines
- It has a cantaloupe-coloured foot that allows it to anchor and move

THE REPRODUCTIVE CYCLE OF FRESHWATER MUSSELS



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