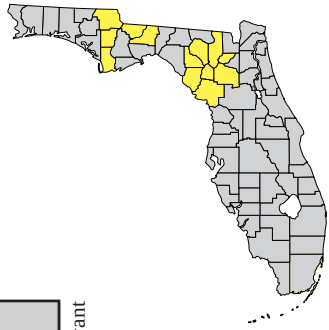
OVAL PIGTOE
Pleurobema pyriforme



Order: Unionoidea
Family: Unionidae
FNAI Ranks: G2/S1S2
U.S. Status: Endangered
FL Status: None

Description: A small bivalve mollusk reaching a length of 2.4 in. (60 mm). Valves (shell) a plain but shiny yellowish to chestnut in color (with faint green rays in some small specimens), oval and compressed (relatively flattened) to somewhat inflated (deep), with a smooth surface marked by distinct concentric growth lines; prominent ridge from umbo (raised area on valves near hinge) to posterior end, which tapers slightly to a blunt point. Umbos extend slightly above hinge line. Internally, two fairly large teeth below umbo of each valve; nacre (inner lining of valves) salmon to bluish white and iridescent posteriorly.

Similar Species: The combination of shell characters given above distinguish this species from other Florida mussels. Gulf moccasinshell

(*Medionidus penicillatus*; see species account) is equally small and can be brownish but tends to have greenish radiating lines on the valves. Because many mussels are similar externally, identity should always be confirmed by an expert.

Habitat: Medium-sized creeks to small rivers, usually with slow to moderate current and clean substrates of silty sand to sand-gravel mix.

Seasonal Occurrence: Present year-round.

Florida Distribution: Chipola, Ochlockonee, and Suwannee (especially Santa Fe and New rivers) river systems and Econfina Creek (Bay County).

Range-wide Distribution: Beyond Florida, extends northward into Georgia in Ochlockonee, Flint, and Chattahoochee river systems.

Conservation Status: In severe decline. Although portions of floodplains of inhabited river systems are in public ownership, habitats still face multiple forms of degradation as well as introduced Asian clam (*Corbicula fluminea*).

Protection and Management: Protect inhabited streams and rivers from pollution, siltation, impoundment, and other disturbance. Limit withdrawal of surface and subterranean waters as necessary to maintain normal stream flows, especially during drought. Protect forests along floodplain and at least 150 ft. (ca. 50 m) of adjoining upland from timber harvest, livestock, and development. Situate roads at least 0.25 mi. (0.4 km) from heads of all tributaries, and even more on steep slopes. Use silt fencing and vegetation to control runoff and siltation at all stream crossings, especially during construction and maintenance. Prohibit dredging and damming of streams and rivers. Avoid introduction of non-native invertebrates, especially zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*); monitor and attempt to control Asian clam. Use and maintain sewer systems rather than septic tanks and stream-dumping for management of waste water. Ban use of agricultural pesticides on porous soils near streams. Maintain fish populations (sailfin shiner) that serve as mussel larval hosts.

Selected References: Brim Box and Williams 2000, Deyrup and Franz (EDS.) 1994, Georgia DNR 1999, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1998b.