



greater European pea clam

US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Building Strong®

Common Name	greater European pea clam
Genus & Species	<i>Pisidium amnicum</i>
Family	Sphaeridae
Order	Veneroida
Class	Bivalvia

Diagnosis: The greater European pea clam is a relatively long bivalve with an oval shape. The periostracum is usually heavy with horizontal striations and the mother-of-pearl yellow to brown in color. The beak is usually located more posteriorly. Inside the shell, the pseudocardinal teeth tend to be closer to the anterior lateral teeth than to the posterior lateral teeth. This species ranges in size from 8.8 to 11.9 mm in length.

Ecology: The greater European pea clam is considered hermaphroditic. Between July and October, eggs are produced and incubated for 9 to 10 months within the brood sac. Once hatched, young looking like miniature adults (i.e. glochidia) are expelled from the female.

Average lifespan for this species is only 1 to 3 years. Similar to other mollusks, the greater European pea clam is a filter feeder, consuming primarily algae and bacteria.



Habitat & Distribution: The greater European pea clam's native range extends from Eurasia to North Africa, with the species typically inhabiting slow-running, shallow streams and lakes near estuaries with sandy substrates. In Europe, densities of this species have reached 1000 to 3300 clams/m² at depths up to 30 meters. In the U.S., this species was first recorded in the Great Lakes drainage in 1897 from Lake Ontario. Since then, populations have become established within all of the Great Lakes including some tributary streams.

Status: Established populations of this species were recorded from Lake Michigan in 1993; however, no established populations have been recorded from inland waters of Illinois. Introduction of this species has been attributed to solid ballast.

USGS Fact Sheet: <http://nas.er.usgs.gov/queries/FactSheet.aspx?SpeciesID=129>