

# Brook Floater

## *Alasmidonta varicosa*

### *Freshwater Mussel Species of Concern*

State Rank: S2 (imperiled), Global Rank: G3 (vulnerable)

#### **Identification**

The brook floater (*Alasmidonta varicosa*) is a small mussel, usually less than 70 mm in length. The shell is thinner towards the posterior margin and the mussel has a subovate or subtrapezoidal shape (Strayer and Jirka 1997). The ventral margin is slightly indented and the anterior end is abruptly curved. The valves are laterally inflated, giving the mussel a swollen appearance in cross section (Connecticut DEP 2003; Bogan 2002; Nedeau 2000). The posterior ridge is broad and rounded with well-defined ridges crossing the growth lines on the posterior slope. The periostracum (outer covering) is commonly yellowish-green (juveniles) to greenish-brown (adults) and usually has radiating dark green rays across the surface. This species possesses a cantaloupe colored foot (Bogan 2002; Connecticut DEP 2003; Nedeau 2000; Strayer and Jirka 1997).



Photo:

[http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/images/al\\_varicosa.jpg](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/images/al_varicosa.jpg)

#### **Habitat**

The brook floater is only found in habitats that have consistently flowing water – from small streams to large rivers. It is not found in water bodies that have static water flow such as ponds or lakes (Connecticut DEP 2003; Nedeau 2000). This species favors clean water in gravel or sand and gravel substrates in riffles of creeks and small rivers (Nedeau 2000; [www.natureserve.org/explorer](http://www.natureserve.org/explorer); [www.ncwildlife.org/pg07\\_WildlifeSpeciesCon/pg7b1a1\\_8.htm](http://www.ncwildlife.org/pg07_WildlifeSpeciesCon/pg7b1a1_8.htm); <http://research.amnh.org/biodiversity/mussel/alasmidontagenusframeset.html>).



Photo:

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Photo:

<http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/images/bioimgback.jpg>

#### **Host Fish**

Identified potential fish hosts for the brook floater include: blacknose dace, longnose dace, golden shiner, pumpkinseed, slimy sculpin, yellow perch, and margined madtom (Bogan 2002; Nedeau 2000; [www.ncwildlife.org/pg07\\_WildlifeSpeciesCon/pg7b1a1\\_8.htm](http://www.ncwildlife.org/pg07_WildlifeSpeciesCon/pg7b1a1_8.htm); <http://research.amnh.org/biodiversity/mussel/alasmidontagenusframeset.html>).

