

## SCALESHELL MUSSEL (*Leptodea leptodon*)

### **Description**

A freshwater mussel with an elongated-elliptical, compressed, thin, translucent shell with a rounded anterior margin. This species is rather distinct with its extremely thin shell, poorly developed hinge definition, elongate shape with low wing, and the highly iridescent purplish nacre. parasitic on fish and display varying degrees of host specificity. No specific tropic studies have been conducted on this species. General literature claims that mussels are filter-feeders which remove phytoplankton from the water column.

### **Distribution**

The scaleshell has natural heritage records in Cedar and Knox counties of Nebraska.

### **Habitat**

The scaleshell mussel is typically associated with riffles, relatively strong currents, and substrate of mud, sand, or assemblages of gravel, cobble, and boulder. It has been found completely buried in the substrate down to depths of 15 cm. This species is probably rather sessile with only limited movement through the substrate.

### **Status**

Global: G1-Critically Imperiled. Federally Endangered. State Endangered. Nebraska: S1-Critically Imperiled. Subnational extirpations have occurred in Alabama, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. While it exists in 14 streams, only three or four populations are thought to be stable and most occurrences are widely disjunct. This species is severely impacted by alteration and inundation of channels, siltation from agriculture and clear-cutting, chemical and organic pollution. The decline of scaleshell is primarily due to threats that cause habitat loss and degradation from construction activities and intensive land use.

### **Management**

This species was listed as federally endangered in the U.S. in 2001 and a recovery plan has been drafted (USFWS, 2004). It is necessary to determine habitat preferences and environmental tolerances, tolerance to various pollutants and siltation, and reproductive biology/glochidial hosts.

### **More Information**

<http://ecos.fws.gov/speciesProfile/profile/speciesProfile.action?sPCODE=F00W>