Expanding research and conservation efforts for freshwater mussels of the Pacific Northwest

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Freshwater mussels are an important component of Pacific Northwest freshwater ecosystems, contributing to nutrient cycling, microhabitat structure and stability, filtration and improved water quality, and fish health. However, these animals face significant threats from habitat loss, host fish declines, poor water quality, climate change and other factors, resulting in declines in mussel richness across 35% of their western range and the loss of one species, the western ridged mussel (*Gonidea angulata*), from 43% of its range. Freshwater mussels also remain understudied, with major data gaps in basic life history characteristics, ecology, population trends, and health. This presentation will provide background on the state of knowledge of PNW freshwater mussel species and share information on current efforts by the Xerces Society and our partners to expand research and conservation efforts to address critical needs.