

Freshwater pearl oyster

Freshwater pearl oysters are a fascinating species of mollusks that are highly valued for their unique properties. These oysters are found in freshwater bodies such as rivers, lakes, and ponds. They are considered to be important for their economic value and play a crucial role in the pearl industry.

Characteristics	Description
Name	Freshwater Pearl Oyster
Scientific Name	Lamellidens marginalis
Colour	Greyish-brown with greenish overtones
Farming done in states	Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Odisha, and West Bengal

Appearance

Freshwater pearl oysters are relatively large, with a thick shell that is generally brown or black in color. The inside of the shell is lined with a pearly layer that is highly iridescent and reflective. The oysters have a relatively large and meaty body, with a pair of muscular valves that open and close to allow the animal to feed and respire.

Habitat

Freshwater pearl oysters are found in a variety of freshwater habitats in India, including rivers, lakes, and ponds. They prefer areas with relatively clean water and stable substrate, where they can attach themselves and filter feed. These oysters are commonly found in areas with slow-moving or stagnant water, where they can avoid strong currents that might dislodge them.

Food

Freshwater pearl oysters are filter feeders, meaning they extract nutrients from the water around them. They feed primarily on phytoplankton and other small organisms that are suspended in the water column. They also filter out sediment and other particles, which can be ingested or expelled from the body.

Species found in Indian waters – List

There are several species of freshwater pearl oysters found in Indian waters. Some of the most common include the following:

Indian pearl oyster (*Pinctada fucata*): This species is found throughout the Indian subcontinent and is highly valued for its pearls.

Triangle sail mussel (*Hyriopsis bialatus*): This species is found in the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Mahanadi river basins in India. It is also highly valued for its pearls.

Freshwater mussel (*Lamellidens marginalis*): This species is found in rivers, lakes, and ponds throughout India. It is an important source of food and income for many local communities.

Economic Importance

Freshwater pearl oysters are highly valued for their pearls, which are used in the jewelry industry. Pearls produced by freshwater pearl oysters are typically smaller and less lustrous than those produced by their saltwater counterparts. However, they are still highly prized for their unique appearance and affordability.

In addition to their economic value, freshwater pearl oysters are also important for their role in ecosystem health. They help to filter water, removing pollutants and excess nutrients that can be harmful to other aquatic species.

IUCN status of Indian species

The Indian pearl oyster (*Pinctada fucata*) is currently listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. This is due to overharvesting of wild populations and habitat loss. The other species of freshwater pearl oysters found in Indian waters are not currently listed on the IUCN Red List. However, they may still be vulnerable to population declines due to habitat loss and overexploitation