

# Mussels



Bivalve means 'two shells' and describes these highly evolved molluscs. Most are filter feeders capable of straining plankton and detritus from the water through a complex filter system. Their tough shells help them to avoid most predators although many become food for larger animals.

Bivalves are often found in sand or sediments and are numerous in the estuary, a few like scallops are free swimming, and some attach themselves to rocks and other solid surfaces.

	Names	Description
1	Carpets of mussels	Mussels grow in carpets over the rock platform and create shelter for grazers as well as barnacles and other fixed creatures.
2	<i>Brachidontes rostratus</i> Beaked mussel Length to 40 mm	More purple in colour, with a long symmetrical shaped body showing regular radial ribs, this mussel also forms mats in similar habitats to <i>Xenostrobus pulex</i> .
3	<i>Xenostrobus pulex</i> Little Horse Mussel Length to 25 mm	These small black mussels form dense mats on the rocky shore and attach themselves with strong threads. Mussels are filter feeders and in turn are prey for a number of birds, fish, crabs, and carnivorous snails.